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Transmedia Brand Licensing Prior to Conglomeration: George Trendle and the Lone Ranger and Green Hornet Brands, 1933-1966

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Transmedia Brand Licensing Prior to Conglomeration: George Trendle and the Lone Ranger and Green Hornet Brands, 1933-1966

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Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
The University of Texas at Austin
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Texas at Austin
August 2006

Acknowledgements

The support I have received from family, friends, colleagues and strangers while writing this dissertation has been wonderful and inspiring. Particular thanks go out to my dissertation group -- Kyle Barnett, Christopher Lucas, Afsheen Nomai, Allison Perlman, and Jennifer Petersen – who read many early drafts of this project and always offered constructive feedback and enthusiastic encouragement. I would also like to thank Hector Amaya, Mary Beltran, Geoff Betts, Marnie Binfield, Alexis Carreiro, Marian Clarke, Caroline Frick, Hollis Griffin, Karen Gustafson, Sharon Shahaf, Yaron Shemer, and David Uskovich for their generosity of time and patience in reading drafts and listening to my concerns without ever making these feel like impositions. A special thank you to Joan Miller, who made this past year more than bearable and brought tremendous joy and calm into my life. Without you, this project would have been a far more painful experience and my life a lot less pleasurable. Finally, an additional thank you must go out to Allison Perlman, who copyedited this project for virtually no money, sacrificing her time and putting up with my run-on sentences and split infinitives. You are a good friend.

The feedback and guidance I received from my co-supervisors, Michael Kackman and Tom Schatz was invaluable. Their willingness to work with me on meeting my looming deadlines while still pushing me to take this project further than I felt capable are much appreciated. I would

also like to thank the rest of my committee – John Downing, Mary Kearney, Janet Staiger, and Joseph Straubhaar – who each helped further this project and offered valuable suggestions on how to proceed. A special thank you as well to Debbie Coleman, whose support and assistance in deciphering the University's rules and regulations has saved me on several occasions.

Finally, I'd like to thank my Bubbi for her endless faith in me.

Transmedia Brand Licensing Prior to Conglomeration: George Trendle and the Lone Ranger and Green Hornet Brands, 1933-1966

Publication No. _____

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2006

Co-Supervisors: Thomas Schatz and Michael Kackman

In this dissertation, I argue for the need to examine the emergence of licensing and branding practices prior to media conglomeration. Through an in depth exploration of George Trendle's licensing arrangements for the Lone Ranger and Green Hornet brands', I trace how contemporary licensing practices took root while also arguing for the need to analyze licensors as cultural intermediaries with particular occupational identities, attitudes and values that shape their daily business practices. This project uses historical records archived at the Detroit Public Library and the American Heritage Center in Laramie Wyoming to re-write the history of trans-media relations between the years 1933-1966 through the lens of one of the most successful independent licensors of his era. Trendle not only shaped future licensing practices, but the degree of

independent managerial authority he exercised over his brands also exceeded the norms of most intermediaries, leading to his eventual marginalization within the emerging media conglomerates of the late 1960s.

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Chapter One: Introduction

On December 12, 2005, Dynamite Entertainment announced plans to publish a new *Lone Ranger* comic book debuting September 2006.[i] Dynamite engages almost exclusively in the practice of "license farming," or leasing the rights to pre-sold commercial properties, for its publishing endeavors.[ii] The company's other publications include comic books of *Battlestar Galactica* and *Xena: Warrior Princess*, both titles based on cult television series. Explaining Dynamite's reasons for adapting the Lone Ranger, spokesperson J. Allen stated, "After all, The Lone Ranger is THE archetype of the modern superhero, he is THE definition of 'Americana,' a crusader for truth, justice and the American way."[iii]

What is striking about Allen's statement is how it simultaneously situates the Lone Ranger as part of American popular culture while ignoring the brand's value as an entertainment commodity. First created as a radio program by George Trendle in 1933, the Lone Ranger has had a long and established career as a licensed brand, having appeared in almost every media form imaginable, from radio (1933-1955) to television (1949-1957), film serials (1937, 1938) to major motion pictures (1958, 1981), comic strips (1938-1971), comic books (1940 onwards), cartoons (1966-

1969), video games (2003) and a long list of toys and other merchandise.

The Lone Ranger brand was particularly successful from the 1930s-1960s. This dissertation investigates how the licensing practices that developed between 1933-1966 have helped shape both the contemporary media climate as well as the continued recognition of the Lone Ranger as a cultural icon. It does so by analyzing the workings of George Trendle and his associates in developing, licensing, managing and marketing the Lone Ranger and Green Hornet brands – not only as popular heroes and American icons, but also as entertainment franchises and enduring name-brand commercial properties. The Green Hornet would not achieve the same financial or cultural acclaim as the Lone Ranger and serves as a useful counterexample in delineating the tensions and struggles involved in transforming licensed brands into cultural icons.

How did the Lone Ranger become an American icon? Why did the Green Hornet fail to generate the same appeal? What might an investigation into the pre-conglomeration development of trans-media licensing practices reveal about the differing cultural and economic value of these two brands and about the intermediary role performed their owner and licensor in shaping them? How did Trendle establish authorship and ownership over intangible properties like the Lone Ranger, which

otherwise might have circulated “freely” across media and within popular culture? Finally, what roles have licensors played historically in both furthering brand recognition and exploitation amongst cultural producers (and, in turn, consumers) and how has their work shaped the ways in which these icons circulate within popular culture?

As licensing and the negotiation of intellectual property rights have become globally recognizable business phenomena and have contributed to the growth of contemporary synergistic trans-media strategies, it is vital that the history of such practices be traced, their generative mechanisms identified, and their cultural logics unraveled. It is essential to investigate the historical roles played by licensors in establishing a business model and developing formulas that have allowed “American icons” like the Lone Ranger to persist across both time and space while remaining proprietary pieces of intellectual property**.** In order to understand how successful brand formulas and licensing practices were cultivated, it is also necessary to analyze failed attempts. The Lone Ranger’s fictional distant cousin, the Green Hornet (1936-) provides such an example. Both followed a similar formula in which a masked hero accompanied by a racialized sidekick and equipped with unique weapons and modes of transportation battled criminals outside the law’s reach. Whereas *The Lone*

Ranger was set in the Old West (1850-1865), the Green Hornet fought urban contemporary criminals. Both brands also followed similar licensing and merchandising practices, in which a central text (first radio, and later television) was used to generate merchandising opportunities and promote the brand to sponsors and to other licensees. Yet, whereas the Lone Ranger was widely merchandized and has become a part of the American popular cultural lexicon, the Green Hornet has struggled to achieve the same economic success and cultural acclaim. Though both properties have appeared in multiple mediated forms, I argue that the Green Hornet's failure to generate the same interest from sponsors and merchandisers is what makes it an unsuccessful brand. One of the central arguments of this project is that licensors saw media texts as means for further promoting brands to potential sponsors and licensees, that extending the brand's merchandising reach was their primary goal.

This project is an attempt to trace the historical development of the business of licensing by showing how it has developed over time and how licensing has shaped (and has been shaped by) both shifting cultural values and economic practices. I argue that licensors initially positioned themselves as intermediaries who managed the articulation of brand formulas across multiple but separate media and manufacturing industries.

As the national television networks consolidated their power by the late 1950s, they began operating in-house licensing and merchandising divisions that effectively adapted strategies introduced by independent licensors like Trendle, undercutting his autonomy and authority and eventually rendering him anachronistic by the mid-1960s. By the time conglomeration began to take hold by the late 1960s, which centralized licensing and merchandising even further, the era of the independent licensor was effectively over. Yet, the brands formulated and managed by Trendle and other independent licensors would persist. Many (including the Lone Ranger) were bought up by larger more diversified companies, like the Wrather Corporation, which stockpiled multiple licenses and engaged in both licensing and production activities. Wrather purchased the Lone Ranger rights from George Trendle in 1956. Though these new licensing agents continued to extend brands into other media and merchandise arenas, they relied heavily on the tested strategies and established reputations that the independents had built for their brands.

CMI acquired the Lone Ranger rights in 2001 when it bought out the Wrather library. Beyond the comic book deal with Dynamite, CMI has begun releasing DVDs of the 1950s TV series, licensed a Lone Ranger made-for-TV-movie that appeared on the WB in 2003, and has announced

preliminary plans for a Lone Ranger major motion picture to be released in 2007. In 2004, CMI's estimated income from licensing the Lone Ranger and other brands for commercial use was $3.5 million. CMI's operations are part of the current trend within the conglomerated entertainment industries to generate trans-mediated commercial intertexts built around pre-sold brands rather than stand-alone projects. In such an environment, trademarked characters -- like Spiderman, for example -- are spun-off from their comic book origins into movie franchises, animated cartoons, television series, video games, theme park rides, toys, t-shirts, and other ephemera, which are in turn re-adapted back into comic book form.Each of these sites promotes the other as well as the brand that binds them together. Tellingly, Spiderman's owner, Marvel Entertainment, Inc., no longer identifies itself as a comic book publisher, but as "one of the world's most prominent character-based entertainment companies."[iv] While licensed brands that have been in circulation for up to seventy years are clearly still central to contemporary media practices, what is not altogether clear is what licensors actually do with these properties. CMI's website explains that the company "owns and manages some of the world's most recognizable family properties across all media including feature film, television, home video, and consumer products."[v] Like

CMI's management role, Marvel "facilitates the creation of entertainment projects."[vi] What precisely is involved in managing or facilitating the extension of intellectual properties into other media and merchandise arenas is not explained. To some extent, it is simply taken for granted that iconic heroes like Spiderman or the Lone Ranger sell themselves, while their owners simply keep an eye on their bank accounts or watch out for illegal, unlicensed reproductions of their property. In this dissertation I argue that dating back to the 1930s, a great deal of work has gone into constructing successful cultural brands; moreover, given their continued exploitation in an environment that presupposes their iconicity, there is a need to excavate and expose the historical practices that have facilitated these assumptions, as well as these brands' continued profitability.

This dissertation investigates what licensors actually "do" in order to make trade characters like the Lone Ranger into "American icons." In its most basic form, licensing involves the "granting of rights in property without transferring ownership of it."[vii] This definition, in and of itself, says very little about how licensors go about their business; how determinations are made over what properties get licensed in what form and to whom and how licensees come to appreciate certain brands over others. It also says nothing of what licensors do to ensure their rights to

property are not violated or challenged, either by so-called infringers or by misappropriations. A more encompassing, if anecdotal, definition of what licensor's "do" is found in a 1966 *True Magazine* article about the "unprecedented" success of the Licensing Corporation of America in licensing the James Bond and Batman properties:

> A licensing agent takes a property - which can mean a person such as Jackie Gleason or Brigitte Bardot, a mythical character such as Batman or Sherlock Holmes, or even a magazine such as American Heritage - and acting as a broker, deals out permission to manufacturers to make products using the name of that property. The licensing agent acts as legal advisor, salesman, merchandising expert, package designer, promoter, advertising consultant, brusher-offer, whooper-upper and Dutch Uncle. For this he usually gets five percent of the wholesale price of the item, which he splits with his client, the owner of the property.[viii]

While this definition suggests that licensors wear many hats and act in various intermediary capacities in assisting licensees to best exploit particular brands, it fails to address the role licensors play in shaping and managing the cultural meanings attached to the properties they broker. Nor does this definition address the relationships *between* licensees that must be attended to, as properties traverse merchandising and media lines. Because licensing practices are primarily invested in extending brand identification, they are deeply rooted in policing the boundaries and

managing the articulations of the necessarily malleable formulas employed to represent their intangible properties as they are adapted to meet shifting social and institutional contexts. How did licensors convince potential clients that it was their intangible properties that sold products, and not the other way around? How did licensors demonstrate that intangible properties had value? Where are the trouble spots and conflicts that emerge in licensing brands across multiple media and merchandising sites and how did licensors work to resolve these tensions?

Licensing is often invisible; its origins are as murky as the actual work that is involved in making trans-media intersection fluid and brands prolific. As such, there is a growing need to make licensor work practices transparent and, more importantly for this project, to situate these tasks within their proper historical, institutional, and cultural context. This dissertation seeks to shine a light on these complex cultural and industrial processes as well as on the often invisible figures that, particularly during the era under investigation in this project (1933-1966), played important roles in spreading and shaping the meanings and values their properties promoted. Licensing practices have largely gone unnoticed in academic histories that focus on textual examples or macro-political economies of cultural industries. This project is interested in micro-political economics,

the practices and the attitudes and values that inform cultural production, that happen between industries, particularly prior to (and as a precursor for) the current era of conglomeration. What did Trendle did to make properties like the Lone Ranger successful (or failed to do in the case of the Green Hornet)? What accounts for his particular work habits, strategies, and social ideals? What effects did Trendle's own understanding of his role as licensing agent play in shaping how these brands circulated across media? Trendle's licensing practices were intricately linked with his self-appointed role as "cultural intermediary" and "moral arbiter," who could simultaneously deliver consumers to corporations through established brand formulas and protect consumers from corporate tendencies to exploit them. This concern was especially acute for brands whose audiences were largely envisioned to be children.

The cultural values and institutional practices of independent licensing agents like Trendle, acting as intermediaries between various media and merchandising outfits, shaped the transformation of licensed properties such as the Lone Ranger into American cultural icons. At the same time, Trendle's managerial authority was repeatedly challenged by the constantly shifting institutional, legal, and social climates in which he operated. There is a need to complicate the relationships between licensors

and their clients in order to reveal not only how cultural concerns often conflicted with economic practices when it came to trans-mediated branding strategies (and often won out over immediate profits), but also how the arbitration of cultural values was integral to licensor justifications of their managerial authority/ownership of their brands and the formulas devised to exploit them.

PERIODIZATION

As a professional practice, licensing is intrinsically linked with the development of mass culture industries and advertising agencies at the turn of the 20th Century.[ix] In *Comics and Consumer Culture*, Ian Gordon argues that early efforts at licensing comic strip characters often pitted their creators against both the publishing syndicates that exploited their labor and claimed ownership over the strips and against the horde of unlicensed materials bearing the image of their creation. Richard Outcault's experiences with his highly popular comic strip *Hogan's Alley* and its star character, The Yellow Kid, epitomized these struggles. As Gordon elaborates, created in 1900, "the Yellow Kid's meaning and reception often slipped from his creator's control... unauthorized Yellow Kid products, including songbooks, buttons, chewing gum, chocolate

figurines, cigars, and ladies' fans" abounded. [x] Additionally, Outcault's employer, Hearst Publishing, saw the cartoon character as its property, and often sought to exploit the Kid's image for newspaper sales without compensating Outcault (or even employing him to do the art), prompting Outcault to add a warning to fans in his cartoon, which read "Do Not Be Deceived. None Genuine Without This Signature." Still, Gordon surmises that the lack of clear creative ownership and the bevy of unlicensed products bearing the Yellow Kid's image quickly "diminished the value of the character as a commodity for both Outcault and the publisher."[xi]

Outcault's next creation, Buster Brown (1902), was more carefully guarded against unapproved replications. Outcault copyrighted both Buster's name and image, ensuring that only he had the rights to draw the character. Outcault also recognized the merchandizing potential for his comic strip character and earned a healthy second income from licensing Buster's image to a bevy of products, including Buster Brown shoes. Though Outcault did not earn any royalties or receive a percentage of profits from any of these licenses, he was paid for his artistic work (Outcault typically drew all the advertisements and display materials that featured Buster Brown). While newspaper publishers and cartoonists licensed comic strip characters as far back as 1902 with Buster Brown,

these arrangements were merely secondary forms of income supplementing profits earned from either newspaper sales or salaries.

Independent licensors first emerged in the 1930s, responding to both changes in copyright law and the nation-wide expansion of media and marketing outlets. Though they often continued to produce materials for a particular media site (for instance, either a comic strip or, in Trendle's case, *The Lone Ranger* radio program), these independent licensors privileged extending their brands across media and merchandise sites over the production of any one text. In other words, they saw their primary product as the brand and their first orders of business as extending its reach. The media texts in which a brand appeared became new ways of further publicizing the property's value to other potential licensees. In fact, my use of the term "independent licensor" refers precisely to this inversion of the primary order of business.

Independent licensors emerged just as previous struggles over copyright ownership were being decided in the courts and by Congress in favor of granting greater control to registrants and higher penalties for infringers. Deriving from the Copyright Clause of the Constitution, copyright provides inventors with exclusive but limited-term rights to exploit their inventions commercially and encourages the "progress of

science and the useful arts" by securing rights and benefits for innovators. Copyright is intended to provide incentives for innovation, with profits seen as a mere byproduct. As such, copyright protection cannot supercede the social benefit derived from new scientific or artistic accomplishments. For example, copyright protection might provide an incentive for a scientist to develop a new vaccine, but the scientist could not then deny sick people access to it, especially if they were willing to pay. Similarly, artists might copyright particular paintings or sculptures in order to prevent their duplication, but they could not deny others the right to be inspired by their work.

Trademark protection dates back to the 1850s and common law rules against passing off property belonging to another as one's own. It was not until 1918, however, that the Supreme Court considered the complexities of unfair competition as exceeding merely palming off products, as it encountered claims of stolen names and even stolen ideas. Trademark law offers weaker protection than copyright law but for a potentially unlimited duration, as long as the property remains in commercial use. Trademark legislation is intended to protect the public against confusion and deception that might be caused by competing businesses using similar marks/logos/slogans, etc. As such, it supposedly

promotes competition by facilitating comparison shopping and preserving the "goodwill" that trademark owners have invested in and generated from a recognizable brand. There has been considerable struggle historically, however, over defining what categories of business are actually in competition with one another so and, moreover, what defines "goodwill."

According to McCarthy, early arguments over trademark infringement often centered around whether plaintiffs and defendants were in direct competition with one another and, if not, how use of similar trademarks could be considered unfair competition. As such, the first "modern" federal trademark act passed in 1905 offered only limited protections. Only technical common-law trademarks could be registered. Registered trademarked names and logos had to be fanciful and arbitrary, not suggestive or descriptive. For example, on could trademark the name Sanka (fanciful), but not Fine Coffee (descriptive) The act was amended several times, including a major revision in 1920, but these changes remained inadequate to cope with the complexities of 20th Century commercial branding practices.[xii]

It was not until the 1930s that a concerted effort to modernize trademark law was undertaken. The initial draft of the Lanham Act, still the basis for all modern-day intellectual property law, was first introduced

before Congress in 1938, though it did not pass until 1946. The act established secondary meaning justifications for ownership claims. Secondary meanings become attached to suggestive and descriptive properties by demonstrating that the public has come to associate the brand name exclusively with particular products. The test of secondary meaning comes from only the mere possibility of consumer confusion. Secondary meaning would have considerable implications for licensors. For example, if one were to add the "Lone Ranger" name to say, a piano or a garbage truck or a cleaning solution (or any product) without permission, and there was even the slightest possibility that the consumer might believe this product was now officially associated with the Lone Ranger brand or endorsed by the Lone Ranger character, even though none of these products bare any direct relation to the original *Lone Ranger* radio series, one would risk violating the trademark protection granted to the Lone Ranger's owner. Nonetheless, there have been many challenges to the Lanham Act that have tested the limits of secondary meaning protection and the act itself has been amended twenty times since 1946. Throughout this period, the legal actions and business practices established by licensing agents played crucial roles in shaping both copyright and trademark legislation, while also anxiously responding to

the delays in passing the Lanham Act and to its occasionally fuzzy interpretations.

The height of independent licensor activity also coincides with an era characterized by intense pressures for social conformity and tremendous change in the organization and operation of the film, broadcasting, and publishing industries. These industrial shifts included, amongst other things, the transitions from local to national radio sponsorship, from radio to television, from single-sponsorship to magazine-format programming practices, and from independent TV producers to studio productions. Additionally, licensors felt the after-effects of the 1948 Paramount Decree, which put an end to not only the film industry's (and, in particular, the major Hollywood studios') vertical integration strategies (control of the means of production, distribution and exhibition of motion pictures), but also to the centrality of B-movie westerns and film adventure serials to the classical mode of production. . Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, these had been the most prominent sites for translating licensed characters to the silver screen.

Licensors also attempted to adapt their strategies to the increasing regulation and, in turn, juvenilization of the American comic book industry. The comic book industry came under fire in the early 1950s for

publishing materials deemed unsuitable for children like “true crime” and “horror” comics. Rather than risk government regulation, the comic book industry eliminated its more adult fare entirely and refocused its attention on much younger audiences. The comic book industry’s decision came at a time when its television and motion picture equivalents were beginning to recognize and target older adolescent and young adult consumers, which made comic books somewhat incongruous with these other media. Throughout, licensors continued to act as intermediaries between different media and merchandisers, negotiating separate yet intersecting licensing arrangements that responded to (and often were stymied by) changes in the organization of media production, distribution, and exhibition practices. Licensors’ need constantly to reinvent both their properties and how they were sold led to business strategies that stressed malleability on the one hand, and historical continuity on the other. These strategies continue to play an important role in the marketing of intellectual properties.

This period also was one of tremendous transformations in the ways Americans constituted themselves as both citizens and consumers. From the 1920s through the 1950s, social attitudes shifted from a potentially antagonistic relationship between corporations and consumers

during the Depression that resulted in calls for increased consumer advocacy, better rights and benefits for labor, and an ethos of restraint, to a postwar climate that conflated citizenship with consumption, and marked the latter as a vital means of demonstrating the former.[xiii] Licensors played important roles in helping industries to navigate these shifts, while themselves responding to changing cultural definitions of Americanism. Furthermore, licensors like Trendle lived through these tumultuous changes and thrived. These changes affected Trendle's attitude both toward the value he assigned his work as a licensor and the values he incorporated into his brands. The Lone Ranger would, in part, become a champion for both corporate capitalism and the entrepreneurial spirit because these were values that Trendle not only profited from, but also wholeheartedly believed in.

From the mid-1960s onwards, conglomeration began to reintegrate licensing divisions into larger corporations. Intense cross-industry promotional strategies were already in place prior to these conglomeration trends; in fact, while more tenuous and contentious, these earlier intersections helped pave the way for the more overtly synergistic efforts that followed. As the practices that licensors had promoted became industry standards, the intermediary roles played by independents like

Trendle began to hinder the maximal cross-promotional potential that conglomerates sought to exploit. By the mid-1960s, independent licensors had either moved in-house as part of studio and network licensing and merchandising divisions or were pushed further and further to the margins Though cross-promotion and synergy have been identified with the practices of the New Hollywood, this dissertation will show how they were used by independent licensors pre-conglomeration and were gradually incorporated into the production logics of media corporations over a thirty-year period.. [xiv]

GEORGE W. TRENDLE AND ASSOCIATES

George Washington Trendle (1884-1972) began his career as an entertainment lawyer specializing in motion picture contracts and leases. In 1918, Trendle partnered with John Kunsky (later King) in the latter's Detroit Kunsky Theaters, managing the distribution end of the business. By 1929, he was president of the United Detroit Theaters, which he and King sold to Paramount Studios for six million dollars (Trendle remained on as manager of the chain until 1935).

It is unclear why King and Trendle decided to switch from film exhibition to broadcasting, but in 1930 they purchased station WGH,

CBS's Detroit affiliate, re-christening it WXYZ. In 1932, CBS began offering its affiliate stations all of its programming free of charge so long as affiliates took the entire CBS programming package (previously, affiliates paid for the network programs they wanted, but had more choice over what shows and time spots they wanted to fill). Trendle and King (though King was, by now, a silent and uninvolved partner) saw greater profit potential in creating their own programming that would attract local sponsorship and cancelled their contract with CBS. Trendle's ambitions were furthered by his purchase of six additional radio stations throughout the state of Michigan, forming a regional network that promised sponsors opportunities for more targeted state-wide coverage at a fraction of CBS's charges.

Trendle hired several freelance writers to create radio programming for his regional network, among them Fran Striker. Striker developed several programs for Trendle, in a number of genres, including crime, romance, and westerns. In 1933, he developed *The Lone Ranger*. While many Lone Ranger aficionados credit Striker with creating the series, both Trendle and Striker flatly denied this. Like other programs created for WXYZ, *The Lone Ranger* was collaboratively developed over a number of months with various parties involved in refining the

program's formula. Though admitting that Striker wrote the majority of the scripts, Trendle insisted on distinguishing his role as creator from the development work done by others. [xv] Between 1933-1940, Striker developed three radio programs that would attain varying degrees of national attention: *The Lone Ranger* (1933), *The Green Hornet* (1936) and *Sergeant Preston of the Yukon* (1940).[xvi] Striker served as lead writer and script supervisor on all three shows and was paid per script for his work throughout his employment with Trendle (which lasted well into the mid 1950s).[xvii]

While *The Lone Ranger* began as a radio program on WXYZ, by 1938 the broadcasting rights were being leased to a large number of unaffiliated local and regional radio stations and sponsors via transcription services, which provided acetate recordings of individual episodes. By the end of 1938, *The Lone Ranger* could be heard over 108 stations on five different radio networks (the Michigan Radio Network, the Mutual Broadcasting System, the Don Lee Network, and the Colonial Network, as well on NBC affiliate stations in markets not reached by these other networks) and was under forty-two separate local or regional sponsorships, mostly bakeries.

The Lone Ranger is often credited, anecdotally, with launching the

Mutual Broadcasting System. To be certain, it was one of the first radio programs to be shared between several of the flagship radio stations that would form Mutual - WXYZ in Detroit, WGN in Chicago, and WOR in New York. No definitive history of Mutual radio has been written, even though many of the radio series that linger in popular memory originated there (including *The Shadow* and *Buck Rogers*). Unlike CBS or NBC, the Mutual Broadcasting System was less a network than a loose relationship between independent radio stations that shared programming. Mutual's aspirations were commercial, but not initially national. The recycling strategies Trendle would employ in initially selling *The Lone Ranger* radio program market-by-market resulted from this arrangement with Mutual and, I argue, contributed to the generalizability of the formula, which needed to be reproduced with every new sponsorship.

Throughout the 1930s, the Lone Ranger brand was also licensed across a wide array of other media and merchandise, including comic books, comic strips, film serials, toys, clothing, and confectionary items. What distinguishes Trendle from other content producers, distributors, and exhibitors, however, was the primacy he granted the merchandising and licensing aspects of his business, with the actual program production serving mainly to further promote the Lone Ranger brand in order to

generate new licenses. By 1935, Trendle had registered the Lone Ranger, Inc., the official licensing company for the Lone Ranger brand, as a distinct corporate entity from the King-Trendle Radio Corporation, which continued to produce the radio series. In fact, Lone Ranger, Inc.'s first order of business was to license the radio production rights to *The Lone Ranger* to King-Trendle. The early Lone Ranger licensing arrangements will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 1.

Though this project will often refer interchangeably to George Trendle and his corporate affiliations, the King-Trendle Radio Corporation (King-Trendle for short) and later, Trendle-Campbell-Meurer, Inc. (TCM), it is important to note that much as *The Lone Ranger* program was collaboratively developed, so was the licensing formula. Trendle's primary collaborators on the business end were Alan H. Campbell and Raymond Meurer. Campbell began as head of sales at King-Trendle in 1936, but quickly became Trendle's right-hand man and eventual business partner. Meurer was Trendle's chief legal counsel from the late 1930s onwards, and also became a co-partner in the mid-1940s. All three were also the primary shareholders in the Lone Ranger, Inc., the Green Hornet, Inc., and Sergeant Preston of the Yukon, Inc., with Trendle holding a 70 percent stake, Campbell 20 percent, and Meurer 10 percent.

At the company's height, Trendle handled all aspects of inter-textual supervision, script consultation, and brand continuity, with Campbell responsible for seeking out new markets and Meurer overseeing both the legal and merchandising ends of the business. Throughout the 1930s and early 1940s, most of the promotion and marketing of Trendle's brands was handled by Chas C. Hicks, though never without active supervision by all three partners, especially Trendle. Hicks was a salaried employee. From the early 1940s through the mid 1950s, Freddie Fralick, a talent agent, acted as Trendle's Hollywood representative, primarily supervising the daily production of *The Lone Ranger* and *Sergeant Preston* television series. Trendle also closely monitored Fralick's activities. Fralick's salary was drawn from the production budget for each series.

The Lone Ranger was first played on radio by Earle Graser (1933-1941), who died in a car crash in 1941, and then by Brace Beemer (1941-1955). Beemer, who "looked the part," also made most of the Lone Ranger's public appearances until the early 1950s, when his television counterpart, Clayton Moore, replaced him. Beemer remained the radio voice of *The Lone Ranger* until the series was cancelled in 1955. On television, the Lone Ranger was played by Moore (1949-1952, 1954-1957,

with a brief stint by John Hart [1953-54] when Moore demanded a raise and temporarily fired). Al Hodge supplied the Green Hornet's radio voice (1936-1951). The television Green Hornet was played by Van Williams (1966-67). The radio voices for the Lone Ranger's Indian sidekick, Tonto and the Green Hornet's "Oriental" valet, Kato mostly belonged to white performers pretending to be Native American or Asian. Very little information is available as to their identities. On television Jay Silverheels played Tonto (1949-1957) and Bruce Lee played Kato (1966-67).

The internal production shifts on both series are mirrored by the myriad external partnerships/licensees that the company worked with throughout the decades in question, each of whom exercised (or, at least, attempted to) varying degrees of influence over the articulation and execution of the Lone Ranger and Green Hornet brand formulas. While these arrangements led to tremendous profits and popularity for the Lone Ranger brand, particularly throughout the 1940s and early 1950s, the Green Hornet brand stagnated. The external partners for the Lone Ranger and Green Hornet included:

Lone Ranger Radio:	Green Hornet Radio:

1933-1941: The Mutual Broadcasting System 1942-1946: The National Broadcasting Company 1946-1956: The American Broadcasting Company	1936-1938: The Michigan Radio Network 1938-1939: The Mutual Broadcasting System 1939-1940: The National Broadcasting Company 1941-1942: The Mutual Broadcasting System 1942-1945: The National Broadcasting Company 1945-1951: The American Broadcasting Company 1952: The Mutual Broadcasting System
Lone Ranger Radio Sponsors: 1933-1939: Gordon's Bakeries (first sponsor over WXYZ); represented by Sehl Advertising Agency 1939-1940: Bond Bread (Second sponsor over WXYZ) 1933-1941: 40 additional separate local and regional radio sponsors 1940-1956: American Bakeries/Merita Breads (Southeast sponsors) 1941-1956: General Mills (national sponsors except in Southeast states); represented by Blackett-Sample-Hummert Advertising Agency	Green Hornet Radio Sponsors: 1936-1938: Detroit Ebling Creamery/Jersey Milk (first sponsor on WXYZ); represented by N.W. Ayer & Sons Advertising Agency 1939-1943: Aired on a sustaining basis 1944-1945: United Shirt Distributors 1945-1946: Aired on a sustaining basis 1947-1948: General Mills 1948-1951: Aired on a sustaining basis 1952: Orange-Crush Company
Lone Ranger Television: 1949-1957: Produced by Jack Chertok/Apex Film Productions; broadcast Thursdays at 7:30-8:00PM on ABC-TV; sponsored by General Mills	Green Hornet Television: 1951: Unaired pilot produced by Jack Chertok/Apex Film Productions 1966-1967: Produced by William Dozier/Greenaway Productions and Twentieth-Century Fox Television; broadcast on ABC-TV

Lone Ranger Motion Picture Serials: 1938: Republic Studios (*The Lone Ranger*, 15-part serial) 1939: Republic Studios (*The Lone Ranger Rides Again* 15-part serial)	Green Hornet Motion Picture Serials: 1939: Universal Studios (*The Green Hornet*, 15-part serial) 1941: Universal Studios (*The Green Hornet Strikes Again*, 15-part serial)
Lone Ranger Comic Books: 1940-1956: Whitman Publishing (*The Lone Ranger*) 1951-1954: Whitman Publishing (*Tonto*) 1952-1954: Whitman Publishing (*Hi-Yo Silver*)	Green Hornet Comic Books: 1941-1950: Harvey Comics (*Green Hornet*)
Lone Ranger Books: 1935-1952: Whitman Publishing (15 Lone Ranger novelizations)	Green Hornet novelizations did not emerge until the mid-1960s, were published by Dell Publishing and coordinated through ABC-TV in connection with the 1966-1967 *Green Hornet* television series
Lone Ranger Comic Strip: 1938-1954: King Features Syndicate (177 daily newspapers)	A Green Hornet comic strip never developed
Lone Ranger Merchandise Licenses: 1938-1954: 171 separate merchandise licenses for toys, clothing, food and beverage products, confections, and other items. [see reproduction of 1939 list of merchandise licenses Additionally, the Lone Ranger made dozens	Green Hornet Merchandise Licenses: 1965-1966: 65 separate merchandise licenses, mainly through ABC-TV [xviii]

of paid personal appearances at parades, circuses, and factories, as well as guest appearances on other radio programs.	

The above list reflects the extension of the Lone Ranger and Green Hornet brands while owned by Trendle. In 1954, Trendle sold the Lone Ranger property to the Jack Wrather Corporation for $3,000,000. In 1957, he also sold Wrather the Sergeant Preston of the Yukon property for $1,500,000. By the late 1950s, Trendle had only one brand left, the Green Hornet, which he diligently promoted in an effort to land a television series and extend its merchandising possibilities. By the end of the 1950s, Campbell and Meurer were no longer actively involved in the business, though they remained shareholders in the Green Hornet, Inc.

George Trendle's turn toward extending the Lone Ranger and Green Hornet brands and managing their formulas across media and merchandising outlets was not unique, though Trendle's particular position as both owner and creative authority for the brands afforded him a degree of control that few other licensor's had in the early 1930s. Most licensed trade characters continued to be owned by newspaper syndicates who haphazardly sold these properties to various sponsors and merchandisers with little centralized control. Little Orphan Annie and

Terry and The Pirates were radically different stories depending on whether one read the comic strip or listened to the radio series. While both were extensively merchandised throughout the 1930s, the lack of managerial authority over their respective formulas contributed to their decline in popularity in the postwar era. Additionally, Little Orphan Annie's creator, Harold Gray, and Terry and the Pirates creator Milton Caniff rarely shared in the royalties generated by their respective syndicates through licensing their characters. Gray and Caniff did earn extra income however by drawing the promotional art and packaging design for these merchandised items. This often meant that they had little incentive to intervene in licensing decisions, since their profits were always earned from immediate extra art work and not long term royalties. Some brands that were developed during this period were proprietary properties of particular sponsors. For example, General Mills owned the Jack Armstrong, All-American Boy brand and while the company did license toys and clothing based on the brand and even commissioned a couple of film serials, Jack Armstrong's exclusive association with Wheaties prevented the character from fully becoming a national icon.

Trendle's contemporaries in the field included John Dille, owner of the National Newspaper Service Syndicate and owner of the Buck Rogers

brand (1929), Frank Martinek, creator of Don Winslow of the Navy (1934), and Walt Disney, owner and creator of Mickey Mouse. Through the late 1940s, most licensed character brands emerged first from comic books, strips, pulp novels, B-westerns and cartoon animation. Buck Rogers began as a pulp novel written by Phillip Nowlan, but was quickly extended into a comic strip, a radio program and several film serials. While Nowlan remained the author of the pulp novels and comic strips well into the late 1930s, Dille owned the property and recognized that its greatest profits lay in merchandising the many science fiction gadgets the hero used in his adventures. Buck Rogers ray guns were amongst the most successful toys sold throughout the 1930s, as were Buck Rogers space suits and toy spaceships. Dille also recognized the importance of cross-promoting merchandise through media. In 1933-34, Dille had a special Buck Rogers short film screened at the World's Fair and generated dozens of new licenses from promoting his futuristic brand at a venue celebrating the wonders of new technologies. In 1936, Dille had another Buck Rogers short film made and screened in several department store windows that sold Buck Rogers merchandise.

Walt Disney initially licensed Mickey Mouse merchandise to fund his exorbitantly expensive animation projects, but the success of these

licensed products caused him to rethink his business model. In 1934, Disney hired Kay Kamen to head up his new merchandising division. Kamen not only extended the Mickey Mouse – and other Disney character – brands into non-toy licenses, but he carefully monitored how the characters were being depicted and promoted on the merchandise that bore their names. Disney also quickly learned to cross-promote merchandise and media, coordinating the release of new toys and other products into various markets with the exhibition of his films in local theaters. In 1935, Disney released Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs merchandise as advance promotion for the company's first feature length motion picture.

Trendle's position as an independent regional radio network owner afforded him a degree of creative control that most newspaper syndicates, publishers and film studios did not possess. Whereas the syndicated *Buck Rogers* comic strip had to appeal to newspaper publishers across the US, the *Lone Ranger* radio program was initially created to attract only local sponsorship for station WXYZ. The *Lone Ranger* radio program would continue to be broadcast from WXYZ throughout its twenty-three year run. Moreover, as the Lone Ranger was initially sold primarily market-to-market via transcription recordings, Trendle continued to be able to produce a finished product first for his own station and only then concern

himself with other non-competing markets. The lack of an immediate national spotlight allowed Trendle's creative authority over the brand formula to become ingrained. Interestingly, it was likely also the need to recreate the marketing and promotional strategies for the Lone Ranger brand market-by-market that allowed the formula to become so entrenched.

Radio's emphasis on the performer rather than the author also likely contributed to Trendle's insistent managerial authority over the Lone Ranger formula. Most comic strips clearly identified their creators – while obscuring the actual brand owners for the properties – and most of the iconic brand characters emerging out of B-westerns, like Gene Autry, Roy Rogers, Tom Mix, and William Boyd as Hopalong Cassidy were actually embodied by their performers, corporealizing their authorship over the brand. Radio, however, tended to downplay authorship in favor of performance (this was less true for prime time programming, but definitely the case with children's radio), opening the Lone Ranger and Green Hornet brands up to greater potential infringements and audience identifications with the actors who played these parts, rather than the company that owned and managed the properties.

By the mid-1940s, Trendle, Dille and Disneys's conflation of

brand ownership and authorship and their prioritizing of their brands over any of the texts that represented them would have tremendous influence on cowboy actors like Autry, Rogers, and Boyd, who purchased the rights to their back catalog of films and began using these recycled materials on early television as promotional vehicles that attracted new merchandising and sponsorship deals. Meanwhile, in the early 1950s, comic strip artists also began to negotiate new partnerships with their syndicates that allowed them to retain or share heavily in the merchandising of their creations. Caniff abandoned Terry and the Pirates and created Steve Canyon, which he owned the exclusive rights for. A new generation of comic strippers like Charles Schultz and Hank Ketchum respectively invented *Peanuts* and *Dennis the Menace* with merchandising firmly in mind. Much like Trendle, Dille, Disney, Autry, Rogers and Boyd, these cartoonists paid very close attention to the formula their brands followed and how these were translated across media and merchandise. As Trendle (and perhaps Dille) had the least direct involvement in the creative process (while Trendle supervised, he never actually wrote a single script), however, the licensor compensated by foregrounding both his managerial skills and moral arbitration over how sponsors, producers, and manufacturers exploited the Lone Ranger and Green Hornet brands. Trendle's conflation

of ownership with creative – and moral – authority over a brand predated the shift from copyright to trademark protection in the early 1950s, which would guarantee corporations greater protection over brand properties as business logos regardless of their actual authors. Trendle's assertion of his rights to financial reward and proprietary control over the exploitation of his brands due to his careful managerial authority – and not simply his creative vision – helped pave the way for this shift. In this regard, I argue that Trendle's licensing practices (along with several others') both helped shape the field and were somewhat exceptional in terms of the degree of authority he exerted over the brand formulas he promoted.

By most accounts, though his business model was typical of most early brand licensors, Trendle also exercised an inordinate amount of personal control over his brands, from script approval and production supervision in all media to consulting on all merchandise and publicity materials. This makes Trendle a significant figure worthy of study precisely because his investment in his brands exceeded the norm, allowing those parameters to be delineated, while also helping to explain his diminishing authority as the media industries became more centralized and consolidated by the late 1950s.

It is also important to consider whether the radio origins of

Trendle's brands affected their formulation and extension in different ways than brand properties emerging out of comic strips or other media. From the beginning, radio was subject to different regulatory structures and public scrutiny than film or newspapers were, due to its free and easy entry point into the private sphere. Whereas newspapers and movie tickets needed to be purchased, radio programming was freely broadcast into American homes. As such, its content was more closely monitored for fear that it might have a corrupting effect on naive listeners. This, in turn, likely shaped the ways brand formulas were constructed, particularly those aimed at children. Finally, Trendle's starting point on radio privileged certain generic and narrative devices over others, since fantastical elements could and needed to be conveyed through oral cues. This allowed radio narratives to rely on listener imaginations about what the Lone Ranger or Green Hornet actually looked like without having to visually represent them. The more bizarre elements of each brand, such as the Lone Ranger's mask or the Green Hornet's gas gun, could be described in ways that made them sound plausible. Tensions would quickly emerge over how best to represent visually the Lone Ranger and Green Hornet as their brands made the leap to other media. In contrast, comic book and comic strip characters were always visible to their readers, and publishers rarely

placed the same emphasis on logical or realistic representations as did their radio producer counterparts.

MATERIALS

In reconstructing Trendle's licensing career and the branding strategies in formulation of the Lone Ranger and Green Hornet properties, I rely upon archival materials found primarily in the George W. Trendle and Raymond Meurer collections housed at the Detroit Public Library. Both collections contain abundant materials relating to the licensing, marketing, merchandising, and production of copyrighted goods featuring these brands, as well as legal documents related to lawsuits and copyright infringements. I also use materials from the William Dozier collection housed at the American Heritage Center in Laramie, Wyoming pertaining to the production of *The Green Hornet* television series, 1966-67.

While I use these materials in order to construct a historical narrative of how licensing operated and functioned, I also perform a discursive analysis on them, reading the materialsfor their rhetorical arguments, for how they reveal Trendle's assumptions about licensing practices, and for how they illustrate the cultural and economic values Trendleassigned to the Lone Ranger and Green Hornet properties. I also

read these materials symptomatically, for cultural and economic tensions and concerns that underlie many of the licensor's efforts to promote, market, and protect these brands.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Quite a lot has already been written about licensed trade characters, intellectual property, and branding. Few, if any, of these accounts have examined the phenomenon in terms of the actual work practices and values of licensing agents or have explored licensor roles in extending and managing the trans-mediated commercial intertexts through which figures like the Lone Ranger circulate. What has been written largely has emerged in the field of legal studies.[xix] Such accounts generally review the key legal cases and legislation, but offer little insight into the cultural attitudes and business practices that inform intellectual property, copyright, and trademark law. Critical studies by scholars like Jane Gaines and Kembrew McLeod often focus their analysis on the infringement of individual artistic rights and the denial of public access to cultural goods that trademark legislation facilitates.[xx] Such work also tends to treat legislation as the basis for corporate practices, rather than the one mutually informingthe other.

There are also a bevy of books written about the history of successfully merchandised properties, including Mickey Mouse, the Lone Ranger, Little Orphan Annie, Superman, etc., but the majority of those have been popular, rather than scholarly accounts.[xxi] These works have tended to focus on the popularity of the properties, inferred through their successful licensing and merchandising, rather than the work of licensors in constructing properties that would appeal to business perceptions of what the public might find popular. There is a tendency in these books to render the properties' success as inherent and the licensor as merely reaping the rewards of their popularity. Further, such accounts tend to address the multiple adaptations and iterations of licensed properties moving between different culture industries and merchandising sites as unproblematic, ignoring the intermediary roles of licensors in massaging and managing an increasingly complex web of texts and products. Instead, popular histories treat adaptations as if they emerge out of the sheer popularity of the character or, in later years, as a result of obvious synergies effectively exploited through media conglomeration, rather than resulting from negotiations and struggles over authorship, marketing, management, and exploitation of particular brands.

The historical literature with which my project best engages is, on

the one hand, work done on the emergence of media conglomerates from the late 1960s onwards, and on the other, work done on the complex and mutually constitutive relationship between different media industries prior to the 1960s. A third body of literature, on the significance of branding and its relationship to the development of consumer culture from the late nineteenth century onwards, is also essential to articulating licensing practices and the cultural and economic values that inform them. In turn, a history of licensing bridges historical accounts of early cross-media and contemporary conglomeration while also addressing cultural concerns that complicate the often rationalistic business models these other histories present.

COMMERCIAL INTERTEXTS AND CROSS-MEDIA HISTORY

Scholars Tom Schatz, Valerie Wee, and Eileen Meehan (amongst others) have all discussed the increased focus on synergy, cross-promotion, branding, intertextuality, cross-media interaction, ancillary product extensions, and market segmentation (with a particular focus on youth markets) that has accompanied the rise of multi-media conglomeration.[xxii] Schatz asserts that the blockbuster films that have

dominated Hollywood production since the mid 1970s are "multi-purpose entertainment machines."[xxiii] Wee seconds, "multimedia conglomeration and the interest in synergy encouraged the culture industries to exploit the promotional and marketing opportunities that accrued from blurring the boundaries of media texts rather than maintaining the integrity of a media figure as a commodity in a single medium."[xxiv] Meehan has labeled this phenomenon the emergence of "commercial intertexts", where "decisions about movies are increasingly focused on the potential profitability of a wide range of products. The film per se becomes only one component in a product line that extends beyond the theater, even beyond our contact with mass media, to penetrate the market for toys, bedding, trinkets, cups and other minutiae comprising one's everyday life inside a commoditized, consumerized culture."[xxv]

In many ways, the phenomenon that Meehan identifies also accurately describes work done by independent licensors from the early 1930s onwards. I seek to build on Meehan's articulation of the commercial intertext by tracing how media corporations came to recognize their potential value. Schatz suggests that the predominance of these contemporary practices is a result of transition (and trial-and-error), rather than representing a radical break from previous modes of production. He

explores the gradual changes in studio production and marketing strategies from the postwar to the present, tracing how the film industry responded to shifting economic and cultural climates, including the dissolution of vertical integration and the growth of network television as a key site of both production and consumption.[xxvi] Unlike Schatz, I situate the centrality of these practices for independent licensors as beginning in the 1930s and I trace their intersection with shifting media institution production models through the 1960s. I argue that the emerging conglomerates of the early 1970s appropriated many of their synergistic strategies from existing cultural production practices championed by independent licensors. In so doing, I will contextualize licensing's shifting relationship to media production sites in ways that explain how and why these practices were first articulated.

My project traces the development of many of these practices as they were employed by licensors in their efforts to extend their properties across multiple media and merchandising sites. As such, I also argue that cross-media relations are not a new phenomenon. Christopher Anderson and Michele Hilmes each have demonstrated that the histories of the film and broadcast industries cannot be considered in isolation from one another, nor that such relationships were necessarily wholly

complementary or antagonistic, but rather complex and mutually constitutive.[xxvii] Anderson claims that Hollywood and the broadcast network have existed in a "symbiotic relationship" with one another throughout most of the twentieth century and that, moreover, their mutual success was rooted in public perceptions of these industries as being "complimentary experiences in which stars and stories passed easily from one medium to another."[xxviii] Behind the scenes, however, Anderson asserts that cross-media interactions involved much haggling between movie producers, television networks, and sponsors over "economic relations, creative control, and program forms."[xxix]

I seek to complement Anderson's work by investigating the roles played by licensors as intermediary agents in negotiating the processes of cross-media interaction. The development of cross-mediated relations is best explained through genealogical approaches to media history rather than in terms of large-scale transformative processes brought about by institutional vision.[xxx] The early movements of texts, stars, characters, and brands between media industries often needed to be carefully managed and synergies were not always self-evident, requiring licensors to demonstrate repeatedly to radio stations, film exhibitors, and sponsors alike the value of cross-promoting licensed properties across media and to

address concerns about overexposure, misappropriation, and copyright infringement. I argue for the need to rewrite cross-media history through the prism of independent licensors, whose motivations and efforts to extend the visibility and profitability of their properties were as significant in the development of national media systems and cross-promotional strategies as those of either the networks or the studios, and whose practies often were mutually constitutivewith those of the media industries.

The Lone Ranger did not become a national icon because General Mills sponsored him over the NBC Blue Network beginning in 1941. Trendle and his partners first had to establish a business model for extending the property's reach before General Mills became convinced to sponsor the program nationally. Moreover, Trendle's impetus for extending *The Lone Ranger*'s radio reach was partly motivated by Republic Studios refusal to release the 1937 Lone Ranger movie serial in cities where the radio series was unavailable. Trendle sold potential radio stations and local sponsors on the added exposure they would gain by tying the program to the impending film release. What Trendle sold was a name brand personality around which both media could organize their products and promotion. As Paul du Gay and Michael Pryke contend, "techniques of 'economic management' do not come ready-made. They

have to be invented, stabilized, refined and reproduced; they have to be disseminated and implanted in practices of various kinds in a range of different locales."[xxxi] Histories written from the perspective of "independent" media producers working within the larger "cultural industries" destabilize normative assumptions about how media works by investigating how economic and cultural production practices are put into action and rehearsed by smaller entities before being adopted by institutions writ large. Various scholars, including Tom Schatz's work on Desilu Productions and Michael Kackman's on Ziv Productions, put these perspectives forward.[xxxii]

TRANS-MEDIA BRANDS AND THE SELLING POWER OF PERSONALITY

My dissertation also argues for the need to re-conceptualize the object that licensors helped broker across media and merchandising sites. While Wee, Meehan, Schatz, Anderson and Hilmes each, in varying degrees, privilege the text as the shared product, Michael Kackman's work on the 1950s licensing and merchandising of Hopalong Cassidy by William Boyd astutely argues, "what was being sold was not a product, but a brand that was both broadly dispersed, even globalized, and

localized."[xxxiii] Kackman asserts that the Hopalong Cassidy film or television texts were merely promotional vehicles for extending the brand across multiple consumer products:

> What makes *Hopalong Cassidy* so fascinating in this context is that the ultimate commodity being sold was not principally further adaptations, but the character's continued viability as a promotional vehicle. We often think of merchandising as a profitable secondary market - a way to extract as much profit as possible from a popular media figure or text. But in the case of Hoppy, merchandising and sponsorship contracts were the *primary* site of industrial exchange, and may well have been the site of primary cultural encounter with the character. In other words, merchandise wasn't used to extend the viability and popularity of the primary texts; instead, in both economic and cultural terms, it eventually *became* the primary text, supported *by* the films, television programs, and other adaptations.[xxxiv]

Trendle also saw such merchandising opportunities as the first order of business, refocusing his business model for the Lone Ranger brand by the late 1930s. The texts that featured the Lone Ranger would now primarily serve to promote the brand, not only to consumers, but also more importantly to future sponsors and licensees. Thomas Doherty has coined the term"trans-media" to describe the 1950s promotion of rock music and teen idols to consumers across a wide array of media.[xxxv]

Building on Doherty's work, Mary Celeste Kearney argues that trans-media exploitation exceeded the adaptation of particular texts across media to the "promotion of such texts reputations as successful entertainment properties in the marketing of later versions produced in other media."[xxxvi] For Kearney, it is the internal inter-industry promotion of a property's success in one media in order to extend it into another that produces trans-mediated texts. Kackman further extends this argument by shifting the focus to brands. I employ Kearney's definition of trans-media exploitation and Kackman's elevation of the brand as the primary object of exchange to describe the work that Trendle performed in recycling past successes while attempting to attract new sponsors and manufacturers to invest in both the Lone Ranger and Green Hornet brands.

The significance of shifting the focus away from reproducing texts to extending brands is threefold. First, brands were intended to supplement, not replace existing products.[xxxvii] Attaching the Lone Ranger's name to a toy gun increased its value, but it did not alter the commodity itself. Second, and building on the first point, brands infused existing products with personality. Gary Cross has pointed to the toy industry's early twentieth century recognition of the power of celebrity to elicit strong emotional reactions from children and their parents, which, in

turn sold toys. “Sales increased when buyers identified products with attractive ‘personalities,’ and these personalities in turn became the subject of toys.”[xxxviii] Ian Gordon has similarly argued with regard to early twentieth century manufacturers’ commercial exploitation of the popular comic strip character, Buster Brown, that “advertisers used Buster Brown as an eye-catching image and as a symbol of qualities to be associated with their product.”[xxxix] A Lone Ranger toy gun might still have been a toy gun, but it also embodied particular characteristics of the Lone Ranger’s personality and story that children could act out.

Social historian Warren Susman has argued that the emergence of consumer society at the end of the nineteenth century saw a transitional struggle between the valuation of character versus personality, whereby the former “stressed moral qualities, [while] the newer culture insisted on ‘personality,’ which emphasized being liked and admired.”[xl] Douglas Holt effectively situates Susman’s work on the character/personality conflict and its connection with anxieties over consumer culture within institutional settings, and demonstrates how branding strategies are devised, often unconsciously, to address these cultural concerns. Brand personalities worked to offset any negative implications associated with their commodity status by infusing popular personalities with moral

dimensions. In his work on cultural branding, Holt asserts that successful branding formulas "perform identity myths... that address cultural anxieties" or acute social contradictions at various historical moments.[xli]

Thus, thirdly, the key to developing popular personalities and ensuring their economic viability is the enforcement of a generalizable and repeatable formula that ensured both consumer familiarity with the brand and with the particular cultural concerns it addressed. Much as Kackman recognizes the significance of Hopalong's "unimpeachable character and responsible civic leadership" to the brand's sales appeal, I argue that Trendle carefully constructed the Lone Ranger's personality in such a way as to emphasize the brand's educational value in teaching children proper moral vales and acceptable codes of conduct. Whereas during the Depression, these lessons were often intended to offset the brand's commodity status, by the postwar era, the Lone Ranger taught children to equate American values with consumption. Kackman similarly argues that Hopalong Cassidy's personality explicitly linked "normative discourses of citizenship... [that were] closely articulated with consumerism."[xlii] These upstanding personality traits were carefully integrated into the Lone Ranger brand formula and articulated in all iterations of the property across media and merchandising sites. Adhering to the Lone Ranger

formula was a non-negotiable (though often contested) requirement Trendle made of licensees seeking to exploit the brand.

The Lone Ranger formula reproduced essential components necessary for extending merchandising possibilities by emphasizing recognizable and repeatable character props (the Lone Ranger's horse, Silver; the Lone Ranger's mask; the Lone Ranger's silver-handled guns and silver bullets) but also the character's code of conduct. The Lone Ranger formula, as conveyed in the varied texts that promoted the brand, sutured a connection between promoting the hero's code of conduct to the righteousness of commodity consumption.[xliii] The formulas that licensors adhered to were justified on both economic and cultural ground. By conceptualizing the object of exchange that licensors trafficked in as branded personalities instead of reproducible texts, the relationships they brokered between different cultural sites of production becomes infinitely more complex. Promoting branded personalities involved the overlaying of a valuable and value-laden formula onto already existing products or production processes, whose institutional goals, constraints and practices were not always in line with said formula, resulting in a high degree of struggle over how formulas were adapted and how continuity was maintained.

THE PRODUCTION OF CULTURE

My dissertation is primarily focused on the practices, beliefs, and concerns of these independent licensors, as they struggled both to define the value of their work in relation to other, more tangible sites of cultural production and to maintain control over the abstract concepts they owned but that others concretized. These practices included marketing and merchandising to different producers and sponsors, contractual negotiations, legal battles, and creative "consultation" (which, more often than not, came with final script and merchandise approval).

My focus on the construction of culturally iconic brand formulas and the struggles to adapt them across media systems situates my work within a larger body of literature on the production of culture. Paul DiMaggio and Paul Hirsch have argued for the need to analyze cultural products through the contexts in which they were produced and to study the operational processes of cultural apparatuses in order to understand the artifacts they create.[44] Similarly, Howard Becker has suggested that the study of cultural artifacts is necessarily the study of the social arrangements that brought them into being.[45] Certainly, my own project seeks to understand how a brand such as the Lone Ranger became

culturally iconic, while the Green Hornet did not. In so doing, I am arguing for the need to trace the institutional, economic, and historical networks in which they circulated. As J. Dennis Bounds has argued in his work on the trans-media circulation of Perry Mason, "[The] production of culture perspective identifies commercial cultural products as the result of a complex arena of production practices and historical influences."[46]

While political economists tend to argue that its economic base wholly determines the cultural superstructure of society,[47] such perspectives assume homogeneity within the culture industries that ignores the dynamic and conflicting roles played by creative and business personnel. Moreover, political economy de-emphasizes the roles that cultural and social beliefs play in shaping the ways cultural producers conceptualize the cultural products they create, which can, and often do, exceed simplistic profit motivations. Analyzing how cultural values inform the production of culture complicates political economic approaches in ways that allow tensions to emerge and takes the agency of individual actors into account, even as they operate within a structured set procedures and conventions.

In studying the production of culture, it is important to both differentiate and understand the complex relationship between product

conventions and production conventions. Product conventions refer to generalizable formulaic aspects that come to be associated with a particular type of product. For instance, a 1950s Hollywood musical usually had actors break out into song and dance at key intervals within the narrative. The Lone Ranger formula always kept the hero's true identity a secret by carefully avoiding plot elements that might lead to the character's unmasking. Production conventions refer to the actual work practices that create a product. For example, 1950s Hollywood musicals were usually shot on a studio set ensuring tight coordination between choreography and camera movements. Alternately, Trendle insisted upon personally approving every *Lone Ranger* script in order to ensure continuity and limit deviations from the formula. Both product and production conventions may be sites for innovation, constraint, and conflict, and each might, in turn, conflict with one another. As I will argue throughout this project, Trendle's articulation of the Lone Ranger and Green Hornet formulas are inseparable from his articulation of a formulaic production process and his role within it. As both brands circulated across and between media sites, the perceived necessity to instill product and production formulas that maintained their continuity (as well as Trendle's continued control over them) became both a guiding focus for the licensor

and a source of conflict amongst his clients.

The question of conflict is also central to analyses of the production of culture. As Janet Staiger has argued, "conflict exists among norms and among roles in the work process."[48] Staiger identifies three factors that produce conflictual tensions within the realm of film production, "the complexity of the product, the need for both standardization and differentiation in the manufacturing process, and the desire to create narratives satisfactory to consumers."[49] DiMaggio and Hirsch argue that much conflict centers on questions of innovation and control.[50] By carefully policing the articulation of the Lone Ranger and Green Hornet formulas, Trendle often attempted to distinguish his brands from others in circulation, while also uniformly promoting them across multiple sites of mediation in order to ensure their continued recognition and established audience appeal. The licensor also devised production formulas that ensured his control over any possible changes to his profitable product in the face of shifting industrial, technological, regulatory, and cultural regimes that threatened (and promised) new modes of articulation. Thus, script and product approval were absolute requirements of any deal the licensor entered into, as was the persistent recycling of old radio scripts into comic strip and television plots.

Licensors were also required to juggle multiple sites of mediation with rapidly shifting work environments and practices, keeping the constructed audience in mind for each, and re-conceptualizing their properties accordingly. Efforts to maintain such business and ideological ties required licensors regularly to negotiate shifting cultures of production, not always successfully. Often, the conservative cultural attitudes of licensors interfered with their abilities to keep up with rapidly changing production practices and the desired formulaic reconstitutions of their properties that ensued. One of the fundamental contradictions that informed licensing practices was the malleability of the properties licensors sold in relation to their reluctance to embrace change, often creating tense production arrangements that constrained and (re)defined the cultural meanings assigned to licensed properties. Similarly, Negus argues concerning the British music industry, "occupational intermediaries… are constantly engaged in disputes with each other, with their corporate bosses and with recording artists. Such conflicts can have a direct impact on how popular music is produced and presented to the public."[51]

The careful attention Trendle paid to managing brand formulas mitigates somewhat against Becker's claims that cultural producers

operate within a collaborative network in which shared production conventions provide a social framework for continued production and reproduction of art, or Joseph Turow's assertion that control of production resources is limited to those with similar ideas and therefore determined by those cultural producers.[52] While both are correct in identifying the importance of analyzing interactions between multiple yet finite sets of actors in the production of culture, the degree to which these actors share similar conventions or ideas about the brand is complicated by the lack of standardization of production processes and product creation across media.

For example, in the 1950s, comic book writers were still being paid by the page and were often unaccredited for their work, while television writers were highly regarded. From a different vantage point, 1950s comic books were under repeated attack for their inappropriate content assumed to be directed at the children's market and eventually succumbed to pressure to abandon more adult-oriented materials in favor in juvenile fare. At the same time, television was moving toward producing "adult" versions of popular genres like the western and the crime drama. Therefore, their approaches to a brand like the Green Hornet would have been very different from, and were often incommensurate

with, the formula Trendle sought to adapt from radio. Trendle's repeated efforts to police against formula violation not only responded to the fact that the exploitation of a brand required the work of multiple actors, who each threatened to take the property in a direction more suitable to their own institutional and historical needs, but also raises important questions about authorship in general. How might Trendle claim authorship over the Lone Ranger or Green Hornet brands if he did not write any of the scripts or direct any of the programs?

The very malleability and intangibility of the brands on which licensors stake their livelihood contributed to practices that continuously attempted to police the working relationships they established with other media and merchandising outlets. Licensors foreground their own labor in order to established ownership over particular properties and distinguish such labor from other forms of work involving these characters (such as acting, writing, directing, etc.), a practice well in line with what Michel Foucault has described as the "author function" and its relation to "the juridical and institutional system that encompasses, determines, and articulates the universe of discourses" of ownership.[53] Foucault further argues that authorship is never spontaneously attributed to writers/creators, but must instead repeatedly be demonstrated through a

series of complex operations that continuously reaffirm authorship as producing a "constant level of value, [having] conceptual or theoretical coherence, stylistic unity, [and the author as] a historical figure at the crossroads of a certain number of events."[54] As such, Trendle relied upon a particular set of strategies intended to demonstrate his authorial control over particular properties, especially at moments when such authority was challenged or the value of his property questioned. These strategies largely involved the invocation of a long and selective cultural and corporate memory as both a salesmanship tactic and a safeguard against efforts by others to claim ownership of his characters.

While Clare Birchall has discussed the use of "nostalgic strategies" on contemporary prime-time television as "an emotional mediation of space *and* time,"[55] I argue that Trendle invoked similar appeals to idealized memories of his properties as a means of asserting authority over intangible products spread across a wide array of cultural production sites and of managing shifting institutional practices by appealing to the historical continuity (and continuous profitability and popularity) of his properties. Trendle did so by keeping meticulous records of otherwise ephemeral events such as audience giveaways, phone surveys, and fan letters, which would continue to serve as contemporary justifications for

the appeals of his products and his own authority over them. Yet, it would be a mistake to think that the invocation of memory was simply a proactive strategy for Trendle, meant to increase business. Trendle's reliance upon maintaining the sanctity and continuity of his formulas was often a defensive posture taken in response to shifting industry practices that sought to limit his authorial control, marginalize his properties, or both. Trendle also repeatedly invoked his authorial ownership through references to his skillful abilities to manage his brands' complex inter-textual movements across multiple mediated and merchandising sites.

Tony Bennett and Janet Woollacott distinguish the concept of inter-textuality from Julia Kristeva's notion of intertextuality. Whereas the latter refers to "the system of references to other texts which can be discerned within the internal composition of a specific individual text," Bennett and Woollacott define inter-textuality as "the social organization of the relations between texts within specific conditions of reading."[56] In other words, even though a set of texts or products may not directly refer to one another, they still may be linked together through a shared character, a set of genre conventions, or a similar set of thematic pre-occupations. *The Lone Ranger* comic book never referred to plot elements heard on the radio series (though the comic did occasionally promote the

radio series – and vice-versa – through advertisements), but someone consuming both texts would likely read them inter-textually, as bearing a relationship to one another. Bennett and Woollacott focus their attention on the fictional figure of James Bond and the ways in which cultural understandings of the character are formed through the inter-textual relationships established between the different sites that represent him (including books and films, but also advertisements, interviews, and other ephemera and publicity materials). They argue that the meanings the "popular hero" takes on have eclipsed, and exist above and in between, the various texts that once contained him and moreover, that popular heroes are produced through "the constantly changing relations between a wide range of texts brought into association with one another via the functioning of [the hero] as the signifier which they have jointly constructed."[57]

Yet, they do not investigate the efforts to manage and police Bond's inter-texts as coordinated by licensing agents – in Bond's case, The Licensing Corporation of America – nor how such efforts, whether fully successful or not, impact both what sites Bond will appear in and the meanings attached to those sites. Even unsanctioned representations are often a direct response to the dominant forms that popular heroes take. My

dissertation is concerned precisely with these managerial efforts and the ways that licensing practices set limits and imposed restrictions on how properties and their meanings could be circulated. More importantly, however, I am interested in the ways licensors discursively called attention to these managerial skills in order to perform their authorship over their properties as well as to assert a stabilizing inter-connectivity during an era of rapid social and industrial change. While Bennett and Woollacott assert that the meanings that Bond embodies at different historical moments are informed by shifting cultural concerns that the property's malleability is able to absorb and negotiate,[58] I contend that such processes are as active within institutional communities as they are in society at large, and that licensed properties often negotiated the cultural-economic concerns of licensors and licensees within a rapidly changing media landscape. Branding formulas were intended to assuage concerns felt by corporate sponsors and media producers – licensors' primary clients, over the best ways to reach consumers without alienating them through excessive advertising or blatant commercial exploitation. Licensors often justified their authorial role in managing brand formulas as articulated through and across multiple media and merchandising sites by positioning themselves as intermediaries between sponsor and consumer. Licensors claimed to be

able to bring the consumer to licensees while assuring that sponsors and producers did not cross the line when it came to exploiting the public.

CULTURES OF PRODUCTION

So far, it might seem as though my project fits quite neatly with the production-of-culture literature -- and, in many ways, it does. Where I differ is in regards to the role economic gain plays in structuring production tensions. Staiger argues, "Built into capitalism is an economic tension that inhibits the cookie-cutter approach to making films. Although it is important that much of the work be routine, capitalism markets its products in ways that work against pure repetition of product... [because] product differentiation is valuable in re-creating demand. Thus, it is completely within the capitalist system to cultivate innovation in products, particularly if the novelty can be advertised."[59] Staiger also asserts that such innovations are motivated by historical changes that require actors in the cultural industries to adapt their product and production formulas to changing work conditions in order to remain profitable.[60] Similarly, Becker argues, "A system of conventions gets embodied in equipment, materials, training, available facilities and sites, systems of notation and the like, all of which must be changed if any one segment is."[61] DiMaggio

and Hirsch suggest that the identification of and "simultaneous build-up and abandonment of stars" is an oddly rational byproduct of these tensions between innovation and control.[62] Simply put, if one wants to stay in the game, one needs to learn how to play amidst and to adjust to changing rules.

While I do not challenge these claims, I seek to complicate many of the underlying assumptions over what motivates conflict and to explore how divergent attitudes and ideas are resolved. I argue against economic justifications as the underlying conflicts over brand articulations, illustrating the centrality of cultural and moral values that are rationalized as economically necessary. For example, if the need to innovate product and production formulas is a simple by-product of capitalism and rationally justified in economic terms, why wouldn't Trendle have abandoned his outmoded Green Hornet formula in the late 1950s in the face of mounting pressures to do so? While it might be easy to argue that Trendle was out of touch with changing production cultures, this explanation fails to recognize the degree to which many of Trendle's own branding strategies had been integrated into the emerging network television hegemony.

Janet Wolff argues that when discussing the production of culture, it is imperative to remember that art is a social practice and that artists (loosely defined by Wolff and others to include media producers, and extended by me to include licensors) are real people engaged in real activities and beset by real problems that inform their ideological perspectives and cultural expressions.[63] Richard Petersen similarly asserts, "the ways that creative people define their occupations and organize their careers can influence the nature of the work they produce."[64] These recognitions are add a significant degree of complexity to otherwise overly-rational explanations of production practices and product conventions as economically determined. I argue that Trendle's intransigence results precisely from the non-economic values he ascribed to his brands and to his role as an independent intermediary in promoting and managing them (though he justified these moral values in economic terms by claiming that these were what had made the brands profitable in the first place).

DiMaggio and Hirsch identify a central structuring tension in cultural production as one of "control over substance," which in commercial media systems has led to cautionary approaches to change and sensitivity to possible threats of boycott or objections from organized

pressure groups.[65] Thus, it is not merely sustaining or increasing profitability that drives product and production innovations (or lack thereof), but anxieties over losing public support by crossing an ethical line in the exploitation of commercial properties. DiMaggio and Hirsch argue that such lines are almost always imaginary, since cultural producers "do remarkably little research on the taste preferences of their publics."[66] Instead, cultural producers *imagine* the values their audiences demand from consumer products and the values that they would reject. DiMaggio and Hirsch define these as "imaginary feedback loops," which preemptively intervene in production choices based on "expectations about what a market, middleman, or federal or state agency *might* do if a certain line is crossed, a certain taboo violated."[67] Though they do not make this claim, I argue that cultural producers write their own values onto those of the audiences they imagine -- values shaped by their particular class and occupational taste cultures. In an industry overpopulated by upper middle-class white men, the cultural values that licensors idealized as utopian and universal were often those that reinforced their own social positions. As Negus similarly argues regarding the music recording industry, "Social relations of race, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity mediate the creation and reception of art and entertainment

products... no music will ever simply 'reflect' a society or an individual performer's life or psyche, but instead be caught within, arise out of and refer to a series of unequal social relations and power struggles."[68]

To this effect, DiMaggio and Hirsch describe the gate-keeping function of various occupational communities in translating cultural production for public consumption through attributing cultural or artistic value to particular works that, in turn, justify their market value.[69] Licensors were middle men, who sold themselves across media and to corporate interests as both having a finger on the pulse of audience desires and concerns and as first-rate managers of the increasingly complex web of brand movements and merchandising rights that exploded in the 1930s. For these reasons, I label them cultural intermediaries - as "belong[ing] to those intermediary occupations... involved in the provision of symbolic goods and services."[70] Paul du Gay describes cultural intermediaries as "play[ing] a pivotal role in articulating production with consumption by attempting to associate goods and services with particular cultural meanings and to address these values to prospective buyers."[71] In so doing, licensors sought to generate what du Gay terms "a discourse of the economy… the elaboration of a language for conceiving of and hence

constructing an object in a certain way so that the object can then be deliberated about and acted upon."[72]

Building on Pierre Bourdieu, Sean Nixon and du Gay suggest that cultural intermediaries historically have had a certain degree of "cultural authority as shapers of taste and [as] inculcators of new consumerist dispositions."[73] As such, licensors often positioned themselves alongside advertising and pubic relations agents as able to bridge corporate and consumer interests. Yet, whereas cultural intermediaries are often envisioned as translating corporate goals into consumer fantasies, I argue that licensors saw media and merchandising personnel as their primary audience and tried to anticipate the shifting needs, attitudes and self-images of these constituencies above and beyond those of the viewers/listeners/purchasers of the products that bore the names of their brands. The opinions and desires of the mass audience only functioned for licensors as a means of further selling their properties to a more elite corporate audience. Yet, I also assert that the "imaginary feedback loops" that licensors constructed about what would displease these larger audiences greatly effected the ways they developed, managed, and policed brand personalities and formulas and the ways they justified their roles as inter-textual managers and moral arbiters.

Roland Marchand has argued that advertising men in the 1920s and 1930s saw themselves as arbiters of modernity who used the new art and science of advertising to persuade and educate the public on the social good brought about by new consumer products and technologies. Similarly, I suggest that licensors saw themselves, and the brands they owned and managed, as possessing the necessary qualities to convince Americans of the moral rightness of corporate capitalism.[74] Bourdieu has referred to this disposition on the parts of cultural intermediaries, as their support for "ethical retooling" that promoted a "morality of pleasure [in spending] as duty."[75] While much of the literature on cultural intermediaries has been both sweeping in its attack and general in its assertions of the cultural roles played by all middle-men in society, Nixon and Du Gay argue that there remains a need for historical work that investigates the "formal expertise and broader intellectual and cultural formation" of discrete groups of intermediaries.[76] This approach, they argue, will allow for more complex analysis of the cultural attitudes and beliefs that often drive - and justify - economic decisions. My dissertation is precisely such an attempt to engage with the attitudes and values of licensors as an intermediary occupational community and to better understand not only their work habits, but also their motivations. There is

no doubt that licensors stood to gain by supporting corporate capitalism, encouraging an environment conducive for consumption, and aligning their own interests with those of corporations. It also important to recognize that these were not conspiratorial acts, but emerged out of genuine belief in the progressive power of private enterprise and licensors' own abilities to sell the public on what was legitimately in its best interest. These beliefs had direct impact on the strategies and practices employed by licensors in promoting and selling both themselves and their properties.

Trendle as licensor, however, did not simply fit into the category of cultural intermediary; he actively shaped its contours. Bearing in mind Liz McFall's arguments for the need to properly historicize the development of intermediary occupations, my project will analyze Trendle's particular construction of an identity for himself that was at once both inside and outside the sphere of cultural production.[77] Whereas most discussions of cultural intermediaries position them as mediating between consumers and producers with little actual creative input, Trendle occupied a double position as both creator and radio producer for the Lone Ranger and Green Hornet brands as well as intermediary between the myriad manufacturers, sponsors and networks that employed them and the imaginary consumers that he simultaneously "delivered" and "protected".

In this sense, I seek to complicate the ways in which the term "cultural intermediary" has been typically employed by exploring both how this occupational identity was shaped (and not just experienced) by the very people who would come to be identified with it and by repositioning intermediary agents like Trendle as both creator and mediator. In fact, I argue that as Trendle's own creative authority over his brands diminished by the late 1950s, so too did his status as mediator.

Du Gay offers the term "cultural economy" and explains that "'economic' processes and practices… depend on meaning for their effects and have particular cultural 'conditions of existence'. Meaning is produced at 'economic' sites (at work, in shops) and circulated through economic processes and practices."[78] These cultural meanings often legitimize the economic practices they articulate, equating free enterprise with "freedom" or infusing business entrepreneurialism with a pioneering spirit. This legitimating of consumer capitalism in cultural terms reaches its zenith in postwar America, where consumerism and civic duty became synonymous under what Lizabeth Cohen has termed the Consumer's Republic.[79] Not coincidentally, this period was also the most successful for Trendle's Lone Ranger licensing, with the 1949-1957 television series helping to generate multiple merchandising licenses, but also one of

decline for the Green Hornet. As I will argue, the former articulated consumerism's cultural value more effectively than the latter because of the particular ways in which its western setting and brand formula aligned with the interests and needs of media industries and merchandisers, while the latter's contemporary urban crime setting and vigilante hero did not.

CHILD CONSUMERS

Where cultural and economic values do not align, conflict ensues. In the case of licensors, these conflicts were multi-pronged. Licensors positioned themselves as intermediaries between consumer and corporation and between multiple media and merchandising interests. The latter required careful inter-textual managing to ensure brand continuity. The former required licensors to claim the mantle of moral arbiters, guarding against misuse of their brands that might elicit a deleterious public response (which, in turn, would hurt its financial value). As I argued above, successful brands often address and ease cultural anxieties over consumer culture. In the Lone Ranger's and the Green Hornet's cases (as well as those of many other brand personalities coming out of radio programs and comic strips in the 1930s), such anxieties often centered around the recognition of children as an emerging market.

As numerous scholars have argued, childhood is neither a static nor a natural state of being, but a culturally constructed, conflictual, and historically shifting set of discourses. These discourses have served as the basis for much political, economic, and social struggle over the twentieth century, often in the service of larger concerns that have only a tangential relationship to children (but always with real implications for real children).[80] Until the early 19th Century, children were seen as important contributors to the labor economy and children's culture was understood as an important site for inculcating adult responsibilities. According to Karin Colvert and Viviana A. Zelizer, the period between 1830-1900 saw the transformation of how children were perceived, from adults-in-training to sacred innocents in need of protection, particularly from participation in the economic sphere either as laborers or consumers.[81] As Jenkins surmises, "this new myth of childhood innocence served, in part, as the basis for criticism of modernity and the breakdown of traditional forms of family and community life[82]." In this manner, the corruption of children by consumer culture became a rallying cry for the expression of much larger cultural anxieties about changing social and economic conditions.

Even as pressures mounted to protect children from consumer society, they were quickly emerging as an important sales tool, sales force

and sales market in their own right. Advertisers and marketers sold consumer goods to adults through children, either by getting them to nag parents into making purchases, or by selling consumer goods that promised to extend children's quality of life. Stephen Kline states, "the child became a central salesperson for mass-marketed goods,"[83] while Nicholas Sammonds contends, "By the late 1910s the child was emerging as the distinct target of advertisers and marketers, a valuable commodity in its own right."[84]

I argue that licensors found themselves and their brands at the heart of this discursive struggle over childhood. On the one hand, their properties were designed to bring children to clients. Popular brand personalities often adorned inexpensive toys and promotional giveaways that children could either afford to purchase on their own or would encourage them to get their parents to purchase a sponsor's product. Particularly during the Depression, many manufacturers sought out new markets and methods to sell both consumer goods and the ideals of consumption to a struggling population; attractive brand personalities were amongst the strategies they embraced. On the other hand, there was a growing concern that children needed to be shielded from the blatant commercial appeal of these properties, as well as from any overt political

positions advocated by corporate America. Arguments for film regulation and reform during this period often centered on the need to protect susceptible populations, most notably children, from corrupting or questionable morals contained within these commodities. Similarly, the need to regulate of the American airwaves was partly conceived in relation to the dangers of having public life enter the domestic sphere where innocent children might hear it (as well as genteel women or naive immigrant populations).

Fears of backlash, both imaginary and real, certainly informed Trendle's brand management strategies, but also produced important economic opportunities for the licensor. Sammonds argues for the need to analyze "the productive aspects of regulation" that "open up market opportunities for savvy producers" by establishing "a set of guidelines by which the enterprising media producer could tailor its public relations address and its products in such a way that those products would appear to be beneficial to the child."[85]

Similarly, I contend that Trendle's branding and marketing strategies, particularly with the Lone Ranger, were designed to promote the brand as beneficial for children. Alternately, the Green Hornet suffered from concerns that it was not promoting the right values for children, and

Trendle's branding efforts, while contradictory, repeatedly responded to these concerns (either by tweaking the formula, or by arguing that it was not intended for children at all). In other words, I argue that children were not simply understood as either consumers or innocents to be protected from consumption by licensors and their clients, but as actual commodities of exchange in their own right, whose economic value could be leveraged in exchange for brands upholding normative cultural values. Sammonds states, "As the emerging generic child became the inevitably consuming child, regulating consumption became integral to regulating development. As mass consumer culture increasingly came into conflict with an ideal American culture, the child became a focal point in the struggle to preserve those American ideals and enforce their inclusion in mass-mediated products."[86]

Since Trendle's primary audience was not, in fact, children, but the sponsors and manufacturers who actively sought this market and simultaneously feared being accused of doing precisely this, I argue that Trendle claimed as part of his role as licensor the function of "moral arbiter." His intermediary position between cultural producers and their target audiences brought child consumers to potential clients while protecting kids from corporate excesses. The Lone Ranger brand deflected

concerns about its commodity status by promising to help children embrace "normative" (read: white, middle-class, patriarchal, and heterosexual) moral values and build character. Since his economic livelihood was staked on his ability to mediate the tensions between selling to/through children and shielding them from the negative effects of consumerism, the moral values he built into his brand formulas regularly superceded the immediate financial reward that might come from altering the formula.

As Jenkins reminds us, though, "childhood is not timeless, but subject to the same historical shifts and institutional factors that shape all human experience."[87] As such, it is important to recognize how changes in both cultural attitudes toward consumption and citizenship and within media industries from the 1930s-1960s intersect with the ways brands are marketed. I argue that, in part, Trendle's intermediary role as moral arbiter became obsolete by the late 1950s and that his refusal to abandon this occupational identity contributed to his failures with the Green Hornet brand. Though many of the practices Trendle partook in, including an emphasis on the primacy of merchandising, inter-textual management, and branded personalities and formulas, were inevitably integrated into the production models that the emergent conglomerates would embrace, his

self-appointed role as public guardian interfered with the fluid and malleable relationship between product and production process that these new in-house licensing divisions could promote.

CHAPTER BREAKDOWN

Organized chronologically, I trace Trendle's career as Lone Ranger and Green Hornet licensor beginning in 1932 and running through 1970, with the primary focus on the period between 1933-1967. Chapter 2 (1932-1937) traces the emergence and development of the Lone Ranger brand formula, including early marketing and merchandising efforts, on the regional Michigan Radio Network and its flagship station, WXYZ (all owned by Trendle) as they directly responded to immediate programming and sponsorship needs. The initial growth of Lone Ranger licensing and merchandising adhered to a strict recycling strategy necessitated by WXYZ's relationship throughout the 1930s with the burgeoning Mutual Broadcasting Network, a loosely-interconnected assembly of independently owned stations who shared programming resources which required Trendle to sell the program market by market. As such, the generalizability and reproducibility of the Lone Ranger formula became central to how the program was marketed. The chapter also traces

Trendle's early efforts to promote and extend his brand across media, analyzing how early sales efforts worked to convince local stations, sponsors, film exhibitors and newspaper publishers to cross-promote the Lone Ranger brand in all its radio, film, and comic strip incarnations. These early efforts to convince local media outlets to work together often superceded the intense inter-textual managing strategies that would emerge once these relationships were concretized.

Finally, the chapter analyzes how Trendle's development of the Lone Ranger brand formula responded to and worked to contain anxieties related to the emerging children's market throughout the Depression. I examine how the brand formula negotiated broader concerns over the propagandistic potential of branded personalities, either for or against FDR's New Deal. I argue that Trendle's development of the Lone Ranger Safety Club became an important means of offsetting concerns over marketing either merchandise or politics directly to children. Cultivating a sales force, the Lone Ranger Safety Clubs also indirectly endorsed blandly civic (to borrow Michael Kackman's term) and pro-corporate ideologies that could be easily reproduced by local Lone Ranger sponsors.

Chapter 3 (1937-1941) analyzes the lures as and the perils of seeking a national audience and sponsor and becoming a national icon. I

argue that Trendle tried to replicate the Lone Ranger's success with the Green Hornet brand formula, but sought to forego the market-by-market approach by partnering with NBC as the latter began to position itself as a national network. Due in part to the public spotlight NBC found itself under and the network's reliance on commercial backing to fulfill its public service mission, the Green Hornet brand formula repeatedly ran into difficulties both over its generic appropriateness for children and in how it was marketed to potential sponsors. This, in turn, hurt its cross-promotional effectiveness at a crucial moment where the potential for building a national brand was at hand. The national potential that Trendle sought to exploit yielded increased concerns over representation, particularly of Kato, the Green Hornet's "oriental" valet, which intersected with shifting racial ideologies about Asians as America headed toward a war in the Pacific.

Trendle's insistence on comparing the Lone Ranger and Green Hornet brands, without consideration for either generic compatibility or differing target audiences, also hurt the Green Hornet's attractiveness to sponsors. Such strategies were motivated by increased pressures to simultaneously differentiate brands and assert authorial ownership over them, which accompanied legal challenges over questions of origination of

intellectual property. While the Green Hornet struggled to define its formula, the Lone Ranger had emerged successfully by the end of the decade as a national icon. As such, Trendle faced an increasingly complex set of legal battles over who had the right to exploit the property. As these struggles attempted to assign ownership standards over intangible brands, Trendle cultivated his occupational identity as both inter-textual manager and moral arbiter, particularly when it came to children, in order to achieve recognition of his rights.

Chapter 4 (1943-1954) covers the Lone Ranger's career as a national icon during WWII and the post war boom (though most of the chapter focuses on the latter period). In this chapter, I investigate the paradox of how anxieties over losing control over his star brand at the very height of the Lone Ranger's success drove Trendle's inter-textual efforts to contain and constrain innovation to the formula. During this period, the Lone Ranger landed a powerful and profitable national sponsor in General Mills and made the transition from radio production in Detroit under Trendle's direct control to television production in Hollywood, with Trendle's supervision from afar.

The Lone Ranger brand also became a full-fledged sales agent for an Americanism that conflated civic duties with consumer spending.

These transitions, while bringing new fortune and fame, also brought with them new economic concerns and managerial strategies that engaged and embraced the cultural containment logic of the era. Trendle's efforts to maintain control over his property went hand-in-hand with corporate efforts to sustain consumer frenzy and reject those who questioned the market's ultimate fairness. Consumption and conformity were patriotic (and were intrinsically linked together), while dissent and difference were labeled un-American. It is significant that it is not merely the Lone Ranger who is presented as embodying these particular aspects of Americanism, but the people responsible for his creation and success. Promotion of the Lone Ranger was also a celebration of American business ingenuity and entrepreneurship. Still, the very exaltation of the American corporation, and its increased centralization in the postwar era, actually threatened the independence that licensors sought to maintain and upon which Trendle had staked his occupational identity and intermediary function.

In Chapter 5 (1951-1964), I analyze Trendle's repeated failures to license the Green Hornet to television as the industry transitioned to the classical network era. Trendle's attempts to adapt the Green Hornet formula to meet the postwar cultural climate would prove incongruous with industry standards and perceptions of the television audience. The

Green Hornet brand formula did not conform to the generic expectations of the crime dramas of this period, which relied on documentary realism. This aspect, coupled with the show's historical distance from the adult western, was a key factor in the brand's failure to branch out into television during this period, as was Trendle's unwillingness to adapt his business practices to address shifts from a single-sponsorship to a magazine-format driven advertising system. The eradication of first-run syndication markets also contributed to the failure of the Green Hornet on television. Trendle's intransigence and unwillingness to rethink both his business model and his understanding of what the Green Hornet represented proved to be repeated sources of tension with potential producers. While other independent producers like Desilu and Ziv re-invented themselves during this period, the loss of autonomy and direct managerial control over the Green Hornet brand that Trendle was presented with in this renewed regime of network and studio power were antithetical to the very cultural and economic values that had sustained the independent licensor since the 1930s.

In Chapter 6 (1965-1967), I argue that the installation of licensing and merchandising divisions within network and studio operating systems at first re-activated interest in the Green Hornet brand as a potentially

lucrative franchise and eventually spelled the brand's demise. The successful licensing of the *Batman* TV series and James Bond film franchise also contributed to corporate interests in formulas that could promote an array of gizmos, gadgets, and other merchandising props. Institutional memories of the Green Hornet's value differed significantly from how Trendle defined the brand and would prove the series' undoing. I analyze the highly contentious correspondence between Trendle and William Dozier, head of Greenaway Productions, and producer of the 1966 *Green Hornet* TV series for Twentieth Century Fox and ABC television. Trendle's insistence on thematic continuity with the original Green Hornet formula versus Dozier's desire to play up its more fantastical elements serve as a central tension throughout the short-lived series. I argue that competing memories of the Green Hornet's value played an integral part in the muddled production. This case study also serves as an analysis of the shifts in the TV industry by the mid-1960s that were paving the way for conglomeration and began to push the intermediary values of independent licensors further to the margins while integrating their brand exploitation strategies into larger corporate entities.

Overall, in tracing the development and articulation of the Lone Ranger and Green Hornet brands across multiple media and over this

thirty-year span, I aim to underscore how cultural icons are constructed and managed, but also to analyze the complex and shifting web of institutional and cultural practices and values that licensors had to negotiate - and sometimes failed to address. As the Lone Ranger stands ready for yet another comeback, this time in comic book form, and then in a major motion picture scheduled for release sometime in 2007, it is amazing how well these brand formulas and the practices that sustain them have been preserved. While the degree of bloodshed in the forthcoming Lone Ranger comic book would probably not have met with Trendle's approval, the fact that producers still see the commercial potential for this cultural brand speaks to the work its licensor put into developing its value. And, yet, while the Lone Ranger still resonates in both popular and institutional memories, and even the Green Hornet lingers as an unused but proprietary piece of intellectual property that might be exploited again, Trendle has largely been forgotten (if he was ever even really known outside of media production world to begin with). Even as licensing and merchandising have become increasingly central to cultural production, the independent licensors that championed these practices have been cast aside. To understand, however, how it is that the Lone Ranger became a cultural icon - and why the Green Hornet did not - it is essential to

investigate the work Trendle performed on these brands and the values that informed these practices.

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[i] "MATTHEWS AND CASSADAY SIGN ON TO CREATE THE LONE RANGER® COMIC BOOK SERIES." http://www.dynamiteentertainment.com/htmlfiles/lonerangerpress121205.html.

[ii] M.C. Rogers, "License Farming and the American Comic Book Industry," International Journal of Comic Art 1 (1999): 132-142.

[iii] "MATTHEWS AND CASSADAY SIGN ON TO CREATE THE LONE RANGER® COMIC BOOK SERIES." http://www.dynamiteentertainment.com/htmlfiles/lonerangerpress121205.html.

[iv] "Company and Contact Info." http://www.marvel.com/company/index.htm.

[v] www.classicmedia.tv.

[vi] Ibid.

[vii] J Thomas McCarthy, Trademarks and Unfair Competition. 2nd Edition. (1984).

[viii] Arthur Myers, "They Bought the Rights to Get Rich" True: The Man's Magazine. December 1966, 1-2.

[ix] See Gary Cross, Kid's Stuff: Toys and the Changing World of American Childhood (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997); and Ian Gordon, Comic Strips and Consumer Culture: 1890-1945 (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998).

[x] Gordon, 31-32.

[xi] Ibid, 33.

[xii] See J Thomas McCarthy, Trademarks and Unfair Competition. 2nd Edition. (1984).

[xiii] See Lizbeth Cohen, A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America (New York: Vintage, 2003). Gary Cross, An All-Consuming Century: Why Commercialism Won in Modern America (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

[xiv] See Thomas Schatz, "The New Hollywood," In Film Theory Goes to the Movies, ed. Jim Collins, Hillary Radner and Ava Preacher Collins (New York: Routledge University Press, 1993), 8-36; and Richard Maltby, "Nobody Knows Everything: Post-Classical Historiographies and Consolidated Entertainment," in Contemporary Hollywood Cinema, ed. Steve Neale and Murray Smith (London: Routledge University Press, 1998), 21-44.

[xv] See TLS, Trendle to Raymond Meurer, April 13, 1967, in which he chastises his former partner for claiming to have helped create the Lone Ranger and Green Hornet properties: "I do get irritated when the writers infer that the creation of the subjects mentioned was not entirely my own, and I am kidded about it on occasions. My reply has always been that I was the sole creator of all those shows, but that the development of them, after their creation was a three-cornered deal... if you can stick to the use of the word 'development' rather than 'create', it would please [me] very much."

[xvi] This project will concentrate primarily on the first two brands, with mention of Sergeant Preston as it contributes to the further development of either the Lone Ranger or Green Hornet.

[xvii] Much like Outcault with Buster Brown, Striker earned a considerable secondary income from writing almost all of *The Lone Ranger*'s comic strip adventures from 1938-1956, a dozen Lone Ranger novels, and from acting as script consultant on *The Lone Ranger* comic book, TV series and film serials. Unlike Outcault, Striker did not own any of the rights to the materials he produced for the Lone Ranger brand.

[xviii] All information culled from historical records in Trendle's files.

[xix] J Thomas McCarthy, Trademarks and Unfair Competition. 2nd Edition. (1984); Dean D. Nero, "Protecting Characters through Copyright Law: A New Road upon which Literary, Graphic, and Motion Picture Characters can all Travel," DePaul Law Review 4:2 (Winter 1992): 359-394. Gregory J. Bartlesby and Charles W. Grimes, The Law of Merchandise and Character Licensing, (1985); Melville B. Nimmer, and David Nimmer, Nimmer on Copyright: A Treatise on the Law of Literary, Musical and Artistic Property and the Protection of Ideas (1978).

[xx] See Jane Gaines, Contested Culture: The Image, The Voice, and the Law (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1991); Kembrew McLeod, Owning Culture: Authorship, Ownership, and Intellectual Property Law (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2001).

[xxi] See for example Mike Benton,. The Comic Book in America: An Illustrated History (Dallas: Taylor Pub., c1989); Les Daniels, Superman: The Complete History, the Life and Times of the Man of Steel (San Francisco, Calif.: Chronicle Books, c1998); and William W. Savage, Comic Books and America, 1945-1954 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, c1990); Bruce Smith, The History of Little Orphan Annie (New York: Ballantine Books, 1982); and Gary Grossman, Superman: Serial to Cereal (New York: Popular Library, 1976).

[xxii] See Eileen Meehan, "Holy Commodity Fetish, Batman! The Political Economy of a Commercial Intertext," in The Many Lives of the Batman: Critical Approaches to a Superhero and his Media, ed. Roberta E. Pearson and William Uricchio (New York: Routledge University Press, 1991), 47-65; Thomas Schatz, "The New Hollywood," In Film Theory Goes to the Movies, ed. Jim Collins, Hillary Radner and Ava Preacher Collins (New York: Routledge University Press, 1993), 8-36; and Valerie Wee, "Selling Teen Culture: How American Multimedia Conglomeration Reshaped Teen Television in the 1990s," in Teen TV: Genre, Consumption, Identity, ed. Glyn Davis and Kay Dickinson (London: BFI Publishing, 2004): 87-98.

[xxiii] Schatz, 9-10.

[xxiv] Wee, 90.

[xxv] Meehan, 49.

[xxvi] Schatz, 11-17.

[xxvii] See Christopher Anderson, Hollywood TV: The Studio System in the Fifties (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994); and Michele Hilmes, Hollywood and Broadcasting: From Radio to Cable (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990).

[xxviii] Anderson, 13, 16.

[xxix] Ibid, 8.

[xxx] An argument also advocated by Paul du Gay and Michael Pryke in their introduction to Cultural Economy: Cultural Analysis and Commercial Life (London: Sage Publications, 2002), 1-20.

[xxxi] Du Gay and Pryke, 8.

[xxxii] See Thomas Schatz, "Desilu, I Love Lucy, and the Rise of Network TV," in Making Television: Authorship and the Production Process, ed. Robert J. Thompson and Gary Burns (New York: Praeger, 1990), 117-136; and Michael Kackman, Citizen Spy: Television, Espionage, and Cold War Culture (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

[xxxiii] Michael Kackman, "The Making of an Icon: *Hopalong Cassidy*, William Boyd Productions and Early Television's Transnational Transmedia Text,." Draft copy, 2006. 12.
[xxxiv] Kackman (2006), 15.
[xxxv] Thomas Doherty, Teenagers and Teenpics: The Juvenilization of American Movies in the 1950s (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1988).
[xxxvi] Mary Celeste Kearney, "Recycling Judy and Corliss: Transmedia Exploitation Practices and the Teen-Girl Entertainment Market, 1940s-1950s," Draft Paper, 2003, 4.
[xxxvii] Kackman (2006), 12.
[xxxviii] Cross, 84.
[xxxix] Gordon, 38.
[xl] Warren I. Susman, Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century(New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), xxii.
[xli] Douglas B. Holt, How Brands Become Icons: The Principles of Cultural Branding (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2004), 8, 14.
[xlii] Kackman (2006), 16-17,19.
[xliii] Kackman also privileges William Boyd's embodiment of Hopalong Cassidy as an important site of civic discourse. The same could be said for actors like Gene Autry and Roy Rogers, whose own identities were virtually synonymous with the brands they sold and therefore embodied the formulas better than any particular text could. Trendle did not have this luxury and his obsessive managing of the Lone Ranger inter-text in part results from his fears that the various actors portraying the character might usurp his own authorial position.
[44] Paul DiMaggio and Paul M. Hirsch, "Production Organizations in the Arts," American Behavioral Scientist 19:6 (July/August 1976): 735-752.
[45] Howard S. Becker, "Art as Collective Action," American Sociological Review 39:6, (December 1974): 767-776.
[46] J. Dennis Bounds, Perry Mason: The Authorship and Reproduction of a Popular Hero (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996), 5.
[47] Paul Du Gay, "Introduction," In Production of Culture/ Cultures of Production, ed. Paul Du Gay (London: Sage, 1997a), 2.
[48] Janet Staiger, "Introduction," in The Studio System, ed. Janet Staiger (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 2.
[49] Ibid, 6.
[50] DiMaggio and Hirsch, 741.

[51] Keih Negus, "Music Divisions: The Recording Industry and the Social Mediation of Cultural Production," in Media Organizations in Society ed. James Curran (London: Arnold Press, 2000), 241.
[52] See Howard S. Becker, "Art as Collective Action," in American Sociological Review 39:6 (December 1974), 767-776; Joseph Turow, Media Systems in Society: Understanding Industries, Strategies, and Power (New York: Longman Press, 1997), Second edition.
[53] Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?" in The Foucault Reader (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 113.
[54] Foucault, 111.
[55] Clare Birchall, "Feels like Home: Dawson's Creek, Nostalgia and the Young Adult Viewer," in Teen TV: Genre, consumption, identity, ed. Glyn Davis and Kay Dickinson (London: BFI, 2004), 179.
[56] Tony Bennett and Janet Woolacott, Bond and Beyond: The political career of a popular hero (New York: Methuen, 1987), 44-45.
[57] Ibid, 13, 44-45.
[58] Ibid, 14.
[59] Staiger, 4.
[60] Ibid, 4-5.
[61] Becker, 772.
[62] DiMaggio and Hirsch, 741.
[63] See Janet Wolff, The Social Production of Art (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981).
[64] Richard A. Petersen, "Five Constraints on the Production of Culture: Law, Technology, Market, Organizational Structure and Occupational Careers," in Journal of Popular Culture 16:2 (Fall 1982), 148.
[65] DiMaggio and Hirsch, 742.
[66] Ibid, 742.
[67] Ibid, 742.
[68] Negus (2000), 241.
[69] DiMaggio and Hirsch, 739.
[70] Sean Nixon and Paul du Gay, "Who Needs Cultural Intermediaries?," Cultural Studies. 16:4 (2002): 496.
[71] Du Gay (1997a), 5.
[72] Ibid, 4.
[73] Nixon and du Gay, 497.

[74] See Roland Marchand, Advertising the American Dream : Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940 (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986).
[75] Pierre Bourdieu, Distinction, a Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste (London: Routledge, 1984), 365-371.
[76] Nixon and du Gay, 498.
[77] Liz McFall, "What About Old Cultural Intermediaries? An Historical Review of Advertising Producers," in Cultural Studies 16:4 (2002), 532-552.
[78] Du Gay (1997a), 4.
[79] See Lizbeth Cohen, A Consumers' Republic : The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America (New York: Vintage, 2003).
[80] See Henry Jenkins, "Introduction: Childhood Innocence and Other Modern Myths," in The Children's Culture Reader, ed. Henry Jenkins (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 1-40; Nicholas Sammond, Babes in Tomorrowland: Walt Disney and the Making of the American Child, 1930-1960 (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); Sarah J. Smith, Childhood, Cinema and Censorship: From Dracula to the Dead End Kids (London: I.B. Taurus, 2005).
[81] See Karin Colvert, Children in the House: The Material Culture of Early Childhood, 1600-1900 (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992); Viviana A. Zelizer, Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).
[82] Jenkins, 17.
[83] Stephen Kline, Out of the Garden: Toys and Children's Culture in the Age of TV Marketing (London: Verso, 1993).
[84] Sammond, 6.
[85] Ibid, 2, 9-10.
[86] Ibid, 7.
[87] Jenkins, 4.

Chapter Two: Introduction

Every radio (and, later, television) episode of *The Lone Ranger* began the exact same way: with the sound of gunshots, the cry 'Hi Yo Silver!', and the William Tell overture. An announcer would then set the mood: "A cloud of dust, a galloping horse with the speed of light, a hearty Hi-Yo Silver! - The Lone Ranger!" That *The Lone Ranger* followed a formula cannot be refuted. Nor can it be refuted that *The Lone Ranger's* formula was financially rewarding for its creator, George W. Trendle (President of King-Trendle Radio Corporation), whose gross receipts from the series in 1939 exceeded $1,000,000.[1] However, the *creation* of the show's formula and its characters' emergence as American icons requires closer investigation. Popular heroes emerge out of, and are negotiated within, shifting industrial, legal, economic, and social contexts. They are not pure reflections of any given moment, but rather they are filtered constructions that are both shaped by and shaping of cultural industry perceptions of the consumer/ audience. Their meanings and movements may be multiple, but they are always subject to various forms of cultural and economic management. This is particularly true of a licensed brand like the Lone Ranger.

The meanings accrued and markets accessed by the Lone Ranger during the 1930s were shaped by, on the one hand, the continued growth of radio as a sponsored, but still not fully national, medium, and on the other hand shifting conceptualizations of the consumer and emergent ways of selling to them that were necessitated by the economic downturn of the Great Depression. During the Depression, manufacturers sought new ways of selling and new markets to sell to. While radio would prove to be an expanding site for such endeavors, it was the recognition of children as consumers that would prove both particularly appealing and disconcerting to potential sponsors. King-Trendle worked not only to demonstrate the sales appeal of their properties to children, but also to reframe concerns over exploitation and manipulation of children's innocence into discussions of the positive moral lessons and character building potential of their brands. In other words, it was not sufficient for licensors to prove to potential sponsors and radio stations that their properties had monetary value; they also had to imbue them with the right moral values.

Moreover, the King-Trendle Radio Corporation sought to align such moral values with corporate needs, an often tricky balancing act as sponsors struggled to overcome public mistrust and accusations of greed and apathy, while it simultaneously pursued a consumer group many

believed needed protection from precisely such interests. Under such conditions, the ability to deliver children *and* assuage their parents and guardians became enormously valuable within the cultural industries, as licensors positioned themselves as arbiters between corporate and public interests. King-Trendle argued that the Lone Ranger, when its formula was properly managed by its owners, was a powerful personality brand that inspired character building in children which, in turn, brought sponsors and licensees both financial reward and good public relations.

Of course, King-Trendle had to convince sponsors, manufacturers, and media outlets of this argument. Additionally, King-Trendle developed its own reasons for creating the Lone Ranger formula and business model as it did. Indeed, as this case illustrates, neither so-called normative business practices nor the logics that sustain them emerge overnight, but result from intense struggles to legitimate these practices as motivated by historically particular institutional conditions.

George Trendle's pioneering efforts[2] in licensing emerged out of the particularities of his status as, initially, an independent radio station owner in need of programming that would attract sponsorship and generate revenue and, soon after, by his long-time affiliation with the Mutual Broadcasting System (MBS), a loosely-networked group of

independent local and regional station clusters who shared programming, but operated until the late 1930s outside the national network model advocated by NBC and CBS. These working conditions necessitated the development of a formula that could be replicated exactly for each new market where King-Trendle sold *The Lone Ranger* program. The reusable nature of *The Lone Ranger* not only attracted like-sponsors in non-competitive markets (42 bakeries throughout the decade), but the repeated recycling of publicity constructed the Lone Ranger brand as an important sales tool amongst manufacturers, ad agencies, radio networks, and other cultural producers and exhibitors.

King-Trendle's early management efforts were largely concentrated on coordinating marketing and merchandising campaigns (both within and across local markets). The need for pre-sold markets drove the development of cross-marketing strategies that taught local stations, sponsors, retailers and exhibitors how to interact with one another, while these strategies also promoted the Lone Ranger brand as a trans-mediated node that could link these different groups together. At the same time, King-Trendle positioned members of its licensing operation as management experts who could coordinate and integrate marketing efforts. King-Trendle was also concerned with inserting the Lone Ranger

brand into local communities, the Lone Ranger himself signifying both a consumer advocate and a civic/moral inspirational leader for young children. In fact, these identities were not mutually exclusive, but intended to be embodied by the Lone Ranger brand as mutually constituting.

Marketing strategies developed by King-Trendle centered on the development of Lone Ranger Safety Clubs that would help train children to be good consumers as well as upstanding citizens. Simultaneously promoting traffic safety and sponsored products through the cultivation of Lone Ranger fandom, Lone Ranger safety clubs were key to King-Trendle's formula for extending the brand's reach beyond any one particular text. The Safety Clubs also alleviated tensions over the moral values that products marketed directly to children imparted, by positioning the Lone Ranger's virtuous personality above and outside of any of the commodities he helped sell. King-Trendle succeeded at establishing a controlled yet seemingly all-inclusive fan community infrastructure that encompassed all brand iterations and encouraged interactions with the brand beyond merely consuming a particular text (and, in fact, where listening to the radio program was only a means of further promoting club activities). This accomplishment would have a tremendous impact on contemporary conglomerate strategies in developing commercial intertexts

(though his valuation of the civic and moral qualities of the Lone Ranger and Green Hornet brands, as well as his role as arbiter of these values, would eventually become anachronistic). The licensing and marketing practices adopted by King-Trendle and other licensors, and the assumptions and conditions that motivated how they went about their work, are also significant not only for how they shaped the Lone Ranger's cultural and consumer status during the 1930s, but also for how they rehearsed brand management strategies that would shape future branding and licensing endeavors as adopted by the media conglomerates of the late 1960s and beyond.[3]

This chapter is organized as follows: first I will elaborate on *The Lone Ranger* formula's development and the conditions that structured the way the brand was constructed. I also will explain how King-Trendle as licensor earned money from the business model it employed and will discuss what licensing the Lone Ranger brand actually entailed. I then will contextualize the factors that attracted licensees to the Lone Ranger brand, as well as some of the concerns that arose from selling to children through branded personalities. This section will illustrate how King-Trendle's management and marketing formulas were designed to alleviate and ameliorate these tensions. I will conclude with a detailed case study of the

Lone Ranger Safety Club as key to negotiating the various economic and cultural values the property had to embody.

THE LONE RANGER FORMULA

On the surface, *The Lone Ranger* formula is fairly straightforward. Set in the Old West (1850-1865), the Lone Ranger is a masked rider who hunts down criminals with the help of his Indian companion, Tonto. The Lone Ranger rides a white steed named Silver and shoots silver bullets from his silver-handled revolvers. His true identity remains a mystery, though he is believed to be the lone Texas Ranger to survive an ambush by the Cavendish gang, who periodically appear in the adventures as the Lone Ranger's arch nemeses. It was Tonto who found the wounded ranger and nursed him back to health. While these elements have become iconic, they in fact developed over multiple radio episodes and through trial and error. For instance, Tonto was not actually introduced until the fourth *Lone Ranger* episode. His introduction was motivated by the need to convey plot exposition without the hero talking to himself. In the first three episodes, the Lone Ranger usually disguised himself amongst a crowd of people to discuss plot points.[4] The Cavendish gang origin, as well as the

story of Tonto and the Lone Ranger's partnership were introduced nearly a year after the series first went on the air.

The generic plot for Lone Ranger adventures was also developed over many years, but was formally codified in 1950 in order to help King-Trendle control the adaptation of its brand to television. The Lone Ranger formula followed the plot structures of many other western adventures. The Lone Ranger would ride into a town, uncover a nefarious plot, assist the kind but helpless/hapless town-folk capture the villain, and would ride off again. The majority of radio episodes ended with a rescued child asking their parents, "Who was that masked man?" Seeking to capitalize on the child consumer market by promoting a positive role model that parents and sponsors could rally behind, Lone Ranger plots were purposely devised to be straightforward and unambiguous. The audience for the series was always aware of the villain's identity and his plans in advance of the Lone Ranger. There were very few mysteries or cliffhangers (with the notable exceptions of the 1937 and 1938 Republic film serials and the first four episodes of the 1949-1957 television series, which were conceived with the possibility of later releasing them as a feature film in mind). Though technically operating outside the law, the Lone Ranger was a law-abiding hero who often partnered with local law-

enforcement officers on his adventures. Lone Ranger villains were always cowardly and evil, with no redeeming motivations for their actions other than greed. In order to avoid complaints from minorities, King-Trendle also insisted that all Lone Ranger villains be white – though the licensor regularly conflated "white" and "American."

Assuming that children were uninterested in love stories, Lone Ranger plots were devoid of romance. The Lone Ranger also never shot to kill and if killing was absolutely necessary to a plot, Trendle insisted that Tonto do the deed -- and even then, without the Lone Ranger's consent or knowledge. Seeking to maintain the property's iconic status, King-Trendle insisted that under no circumstances were plots to place the Lone Ranger in a position where he might be unmasked. The only exception to this rule came in the 1937 Republic serial, *The Lone Ranger*, where the hero's identity was revealed in the final episode. King-Trendle tried to fight Republic on this, but failed. After this incident, King-Trendle contractually prohibited clients from unmasking the Lone Ranger. Though recent marketing efforts to relaunch the Lone Ranger franchise have labeled the character a "superhero," one important distinction is that the Lone Ranger had no secret identity or private life (unlike Superman/Clark Kent or Batman/Bruce Wayne). King-Trendle's

insistence that the character's true identity remain a mystery was intended to further promote its mythic quality. Similarly, the licensor insisted that Lone Ranger plots always have the hero fighting for a larger cause and not simply to help individuals in need. As the Lone Ranger's value grew, the stakes were raised at both the textual and promotional level. Initially, the Lone Ranger aided entire communities and promoted traffic safety through his Safety Clubs, but as the property's value grew, so did the causes the hero fought for. By the postwar era, the Lone Ranger fought to defend pioneering industries like the railroad and taught children to be good Americans.

As stated in the introductory chapter to this project, the development of the Lone Ranger brand was a collaborative effort. While George Trendle owned the copyright and claimed the title of creator, the formula actually originated with Fran Striker, the head writer and script supervisor for the radio series.[5] Striker employed a "morphological approach to plotting", which comprised "modular pieces, archetypal forms or everyday experiences arranged in columns according to whether they referred to character traits, objectives to be reached, obstacles to be overcome, or solutions to problems."[6] Alexander Russo argues that Striker generated plots by combining different elements in endless variations.[7]

Striker referred to his writing process in even more formulaic terms: "Drama consists of a character in conflict 'A' desiring 'B' is opposed by 'C'. This is conflict... DESIRE opposed by OBSTACLE equals EMOTION."[8]

While this formula would serve as the basis for most Lone Ranger radio, comic book, comic strip, television stories and novelizations over the next twenty years, it is important to situate the brand's development within the particular historical and institutional context that first determined the character traits, objectives, obstacles, and solutions from which the Lone Ranger's identity would be forged. The formula served the particular needs of its creators, the King-Trendle Radio Corporation and its flagship station, WXYZ. From its inception, *The Lone Ranger* radio series formula was designed to attract sponsorship by appealing to children.

In 1930, George Washington Trendle and John Kunsky (later King) formed the Kunsky-Trendle Broadcasting Corporation (later King-Trendle) and bought radio station WGH in Detroit, Michigan, re-christening it WXYZ. At the time, WXYZ was Detroit's CBS affiliate, but in 1932, Trendle cancelled the station's contract with the national network, opting instead to create a regional network, The Michigan Radio Network

(MRN), with WXYZ as the flagship station. To this end, he bought up seven additional radio stations in the State. While later self-aggrandizing publicity from the 1950s would label Trendle a "pioneer" and a "rebel" for these decisions, his choice to go independent was rooted in simple economics.[9] In 1932, CBS implemented a new policy by which it would pay affiliates to take its programming, sponsored and sustaining, but this required that affiliates take all or nothing.[10] Trendle saw greater profit margins in reserving evening hours for locally sponsored programming, but he now faced the double need to generate programming and convince sponsors that the MRN could attract listeners. Without CBS's steady influx of programming, WXYZ initially lost $4000 a week.[11] In order to promote both the flagship station and the seven other stations that formed the MRN, Trendle needed programming that could compete with NBC and CBS, at a fraction of the cost, and attract audiences who, in turn, would lure sponsors.

Knowing that MRN could not afford the production budgets that NBC and CBS were investing in variety programming featuring celebrity hosts and Hollywood guest stars,[12] King-Trendle opted to create dramas because they were cheap to produce and could employ an anonymous set of actors who would work on various programs.[13] Trendle also decided to

target children since he believed that this group was less discerning than adult listeners and would forgive poor production values in exchange for action and adventure.[14] The romanticization of the Lone Ranger's origins asserts that Trendle settled on a western setting for the series instead of a crime drama because of his nostalgic childhood memories of reading dime store novels about the moral fortitude and bravery of cowboys.[15] However, the truth is that MRN created series in both genres, both also written by Striker. *The Lone Ranger* debuted on January 30, 1933, only a few weeks after *Manhunter*, a series about a crusading district attorney. The two series initially were alternated with one another. [16]

While Striker may have formalized the plot structure, various members of Trendle's broadcasting company played a part in developing the characteristics necessary to create a competitive series that would attract children, who in turn, would attract sponsorship. Letters between Striker and James Jewell, a director at WXYZ, between 1932-1933 outline some of the basic characteristics and elements of the Lone Ranger brand. Jewell would later claim to have been the Lone Ranger's true creator, which Trendle hotly denied. Regardless, all King-Trendle employees were required to sign contracts that prohibited them from making any ownership claims on characters or stories that they might have helped

develop, so that copyright rested exclusively with the King-Trendle Radio Corporation. It is also worth noting that all of Jewell's letters to Striker always convey suggestions and revisions from other members of the company, including Trendle, evidencing the collaborative creative process.

Many of the elements of the Lone Ranger's appearance that would become iconic were introduced with the search for sponsors and the child audience in mind. The Lone Ranger's mask was intended to add an element of mystery that would distinguish the series from other children's adventure shows and the character from Hollywood matinee western heroes. Trendle described the Lone Ranger as a cross between Robin Hood and a Tom Mix type. Whereas Robin Hood had an established persona, but was a fictional character (conveniently located in the public domain, legally allowing for comparisons to be made between him and the Lone Ranger - see next chapter), Mix was a real actor (hence, the declaration that the Lone Ranger was a "Tom Mix type" and *not* inspired by Tom Mix) who commanded a high salary for his services.

Sponsors were demanding Hollywood stars and the networks promised to deliver the type of mass audience that justified the expense.[17] King-Trendle's regional network needed another option. In the absence of

any real stars on the program, the character himself had to stand out, and the mask was intended to make the Lone Ranger an object of fascination in the same manner as other celebrities of the era, at a fraction of the cost. As Gary Cross has suggested about branded radio cowboy personalities (both real celebrities and fictional characters)**,** "the cowboy star... offered boys a wide variety of fantasies based on courageous, powerful individualists who defended right against wrong."[18]

The Lone Ranger's use of silver bullets was settled upon because Trendle wanted the program to have identifiable signature premiums. Premiums were cheap mass-produced giveaway items that usually bore the brand's insignia and were offered to radio listeners (or film goers and newspaper readers) in exchange for their writing in and, occasionally, providing proof of purchase of a sponsor's item. Most premiums were directed at children, who were instructed to convince their parents to buy a particular product so that they could mail in the proof of purchase to receive their "free" gift. "Radio advertisers used the heroes of their programs in premiums to increase sales. [Radio heroes like] Jack Armstrong, Tom Mix, Buck Rogers, Charlie McCarthy, and Little Orphan Annie won loyal audiences and sold malt drinks, breakfast foods, and coffee when children collected labels and box tops to "earn" compasses,

pedometers, decoder rings, and even pocket knives with their favorite hero's picture on them."[19] Premiums were also an important way of measuring both the size and consumer-friendliness of a given program's audience when seeking out a potential sponsor for a series. While Cross convincingly argues that science fiction programs like Buck Rogers offered the greatest opportunity for premiums because of their constant use of gadgets and gizmos integrated into their stories, Trendle believed that westerns offered more opportunities for premiums than other children's programs.[20]

In June 1933, four months after *The Lone Ranger* series debuted, MRN put out a promotional pamphlet entitled "Radio's Most Spectacular Incident – Five Minutes of Reading Time that Dispels Five Years of Doubt." Upon unfolding the pamphlet, potential sponsors came to a two-page spread with the headline "Twenty-Four Thousand Six Hundred Seven LETTERS RECEIVED From One Announcement Broadcast at 9:30 p.m."[21] The announcement at the end of the program had promised "genuine Lone Ranger six-shooter[s]" to the first 300 people who wrote to the stations requesting one.[22] The enormous number of requests received was now being converted into publicity both for the program and the Michigan Network.

Many licensed brands that would emerge in the 1930s initially resulted from circumstances intended largely to promote their parent company to potential investors (whether sponsors or consumers) and bring in additional sources of revenue during the Depression. For instance, the *Radio Orphan Annie* series that debuted on Chicago's WGN on December 8, 1930 helped publicize *The Chicago Tribune*. Aside from publishing the comic strip and syndicating it nationwide to over 500 other newspapers, the *Chicago Tribune* also owned WGN precisely as a publicity vehicle for its columnists and comic strips in order to sell more newspapers.[23] Similarly, *The Lone Ranger* was initially created to promote WXYZ to regional sponsors.

King-Trendle's strategy paid off when the Gordon Bakery, makers of Silvercup Bread, became the program's sponsor on November 27, 1933 (it would remain a major sponsor of the show until March 1939).[24] Gordon reaped immediate success with the program - a promotional ad in Grocer's Spotlight Newspaper stated "Our Best Salesman Rides a Horse."[25]

One important distinction between the Lone Ranger and other brands like Little Orphan Annie, indeed between licensors in general and media companies that licensed characters primarily for extra income, like the Chicago Tribune Syndicate, was the degree of control licensors

exercised over the properties they marketed. *The Lone Ranger*, like all other radio productions created by King-Trendle was broadcast from the WXYZ studios in downtown Detroit. It was produced by King-Trendle throughout its 23-year radio career. As Russo suggests, though Trendle was not involved in the day-to-day production of the series, the relatively small scale of production (as opposed to NBC or CBS), placed ultimate control over the radio product in his hands.[26] Trendle would insist on continued and active involvement in almost every facet of *The Lone Ranger's* production; indeed, he sold himself (and the licensing profession in general) as a management expert who developed detailed integrated merchandising strategies that potential sponsors were required to buy along with the character rights.

Interestingly, many of the elements originally used in attracting local sponsorship for the radio program would be reconfigured to help expand the Lone Ranger brand to other radio stations and across media and merchandising outlets. As King-Trendle refocused its primary object of sale on the brand itself, the complex business model that would drive sales also began to take shape, becoming as integral part of the Lone Ranger formula.

THE BUSINESS MODEL

While the product was originally created to promote WXYZ and MRN to potential sponsors, within a couple of years King-Trendle recognized that greater profits lay in extending *The Lone Ranger* program beyond Michigan and the Lone Ranger brand beyond radio programming. The business model that evolved targeted independent radio stations in non-competitive markets and helped them to attract like-sponsors through marketing strategies that stressed the reusable qualities and recycled sales successes of past brand-sponsor interactions. In this sense, the formulaic aspects of the promotional capabilities were as important to its sales effectiveness as repetitive plot elements. Moreover, as the brand expanded into other media, King-Trendle's profits, and thus its sales strategies, became tied to selling to local radio stations, film exhibitors, and newspaper publishers on the mutually beneficial possibilities of cross-promotion. Finally, whereas premiums had initially been developed to call attention to the radio program, new merchandising schemes would use the radio program to promote the brand.

On January 31, 1935, Trendle incorporated The Lone Ranger. While Trendle would later explain this decision away as a means of protecting WXYZ from lawsuits, the incorporation also gave The Lone

Ranger Inc the right to lease the characters and stories featured under that title for any promotional or production purpose. Trendle's first licensee was himself as he granted, for the cost of one dollar, the King-Trendle Radio Corporation the right to produce the radio series and required that any sponsor attached to the radio series use those broadcasts exclusively. The initial impetus to extend the market penetration of *The Lone Ranger* radio series actually came from Gordon's Bakery. Gordon was a regional manufacturer with markets in Michigan, Illinois, New York and Ohio. As such, it quickly pressed for the series to be heard over other radio stations outside the Michigan Radio Network market. Sponsor pressures led to negotiations with other independent radio stations in those markets (WGN in Chicago, WLW in Cincinnati, and WOR in New York) to air the series. This informal exchange of programming would lead to the development of the Mutual Radio Network in 1934, with WXYZ as one its flagship stations.[27] Since Mutual consisted of a loosely inter-connected group of independent radio stations that shared programming, most *Lone Ranger* episodes were distributed via mail on transcribed recordings to non-networked stations.[28] By 1937, WXYZ earned most of its revenue through the sale of programming to other stations, rather than the selling of time to sponsors.[29]

The Lone Ranger was sold market by market to independently owned and operated stations, most of which were loosely affiliated with regional independent networks, like the Don Lee Network in California and the Pacific Coast and the Colonial and Yankee Networks out of New England. King-Trendle contracted independent radio stations that purchased the transcribed radio program on a sustaining basis in 13, 26, or 52-week blocks, while searching for a local sponsor. In exchange for a net payment usually equivalent to 30-50 percent of the highest priced half-hour drama on a station's schedule, depending on the size of the market King-Trendle not only supplied three 15-minute episodes per week, but also publicity and advertising materials, lists of preferred premium manufacturers (i.e., those that King-Trendle collected a healthy royalty on), and other merchandising management expertise.[30]

NBC generally thought very little of the series - an internal memo evaluating whether they should attempt to lure *The Lone Ranger* to the Blue Network described it as "a dime novel translated into radio. Overplayed and overwritten." [31] But this did not prevent it from entering into a transcription arrangement with King-Trendle in 1938 that expanded *The Lone Ranger's* reach even further. In addition to making the recordings, NBC was also sub-licensed to sell the series to its affiliates in

markets where Mutual did not have a presence. This history contributes to the confusion over when *The Lone Ranger* actually began airing on NBC. It aired as a transcription series on many local NBC affiliates several years before joining the NBC Blue Network in 1941 under General Mills' national sponsorship. While King-Trendle paid $90 for every 30-minute transcription recording of the show NBC made, NBC paid King-Trendle 50 percent of net receipts for any recordings they leased on its behalf.[32] King-Trendle would assist station salesmen in finding sponsors by providing stations with publicity materials and merchandising guides, but local stations also paid King-Trendle to take the series on a sustaining basis until they could procure a sponsor. Once a sponsor was found, King-Trendle would convince them to pursue merchandising schemes like the Safety Club, requiring added licensing fees for premiums, display materials, etc.

Licensing market-by-market meant that sponsors generally were local or regional businesses. King-Trendle often targeted like-businesses in non-competitive markets, using the statistical evidence and merchandising success garnered by sponsors to further the reach of his property. By August 1938, *The Lone Ranger's* success for Gordon's Bakeries had translated into 42 different regional sponsors, mostly

bakeries in non-competitive territories, including Cobacko Bakeries, Weber Baking Co., Cramer Baking Co., and Kilpatrick's Bakeries, but also companies like the 7-Up Bottling Co. in Baltimore.[33] In September 1938, Bond Bread became the regional sponsor in the Washington, DC market on station WOL.[34] Bond eventually would take over from Gordon as the Lone Ranger's WXYZ sponsor.[35] As evidenced by a 1937 merchandising exploitation publicity supplement assembled by King-Trendle for potential sponsors, the very reproducibility of the Lone Ranger's marketing formula was a key to its success. It contains a four-page spread titled "Consumer Tie-In" that showcases the various sponsor tie-in materials used to promote and exploit The Lone Ranger Safety Club.[36]

First adapted on October 14, 1935 by The Sehl Advertising Agency for Gordon's Bakeries (though it had been envisioned as far back as 1933 by Lone Ranger scribe Fran Striker), the Safety Club was marketed by King-Trendle as "a handy index to the popularity of the program."[37] The Lone Ranger incorporation guaranteed that any promotional materials or premium giveaways devised by sponsors of the series needed to be copyrighted in the name of The Lone Ranger Inc., granting Trendle not only ownership of said promotional materials, but the

right to reproduce and sell those ideas to other potential sponsors (usually outside of the primary markets of those sponsors who might have devised the promotion or after a certain amount of time had allotted on the contract). While sponsors paid the entire costs of developing, manufacturing, and promoting Lone Ranger premiums, the Lone Ranger Inc., owned the copyrights (even the registration costs of which were born by sponsors).

Throughout his career, Trendle would often cannibalize promotional materials developed by sponsors (and sponsors' advertising agencies) as merchandising materials in his efforts to win new *Lone Ranger* sponsors or help existing ones expand their reach into new markets. Licensor contracts also stipulated that all promotional material devised by sponsors first required King-Trendle's approval before being disseminated, since it was imperative that it convey the appropriate brand image and be reusable in other contexts by maintaining thematic and visual consistency.

King-Trendle maintained strict control over the production of premiums, licensing particular companies to produce them and restricting those manufacturers from selling premiums to anyone but radio sponsors. They also required that sponsors either purchase premiums directly from

these manufacturers or, if they sought a cheaper alternative, insisted that samples be given approval before another manufacturer could be employed. A percentage of every premium order by sponsors went back into King-Trendle's coffers as a royalty paid to them by the manufacturer, exponentially increasing the licensor's earnings. It is no wonder that King-Trendle worked as hard as it did to convince sponsors to maximize their premium usage by tying the Lone Ranger brand into their products, since this not only provided increased exposure for the brand, but added revenue for the company.

The supplement brochure replicated various sponsor tie-in items for the Safety Club, including membership pledge cards, badges, secret decoder cards, and Safety Club newsletters. Each of these items appeared multiple times on the display page, which was organized like a collage, emphasizing the uniformity of the merchandising process [See image #1]. While each item was shown to be reusable in different markets, the merchandising supplement also revealed how minor variations were incorporated according to sponsor needs. For instance, the shapes of the badges differed, likely according to the price quoted by regional manufacturers licensed to produce this give-away for a given sponsor. The pledge cards, each containing ten promises made by members, also

varied, some placing almost exclusive emphasis on traffic safety while others extending the scope of the pledge to encompass larger civic duties and moral values.[38] Licensing practices relied heavily on these recycling strategies to demonstrate the reusable qualities of their properties. Licensors also relied on obtaining constantly updated sales information from their clients. In the absence of tangible evidence of the sales appeal their properties possessed, recycling statistics culled from audience write-ins for premiums and, more importantly, from sponsors, ad agencies and stations' reporting on successful marketing campaigns became the primary mode through which licensors proved that their properties brought tangible economic results.

Trendle's promotional files are filled with letters from radio stations, advertising agencies, and sponsors commenting on the success of various merchandising campaigns. These letters responded to King-Trendle's requests for statistical information (occasionally, such information was even contractually required). Letters from April 21-26, 1938, for instance, responded to King-Trendle's inquiries about the first 60 days of Lone Ranger broadcasts across stations from Cincinnati to San Francisco. These letters reveal the types of information King-Trendle was interested in cultivating. Uniformly, these letters answered questions about

Safety Club membership, giveaway responses, and advertising tie-ins (especially with the recently released Lone Ranger motion picture serial). King-Trendle's questions selectively produced responses that foregrounded the role of his property in selling sponsor goods, ignoring information such as previous customer bases, other promotional efforts, quality of merchandise, etc. Impressive statistical information was circled with the comment "the first 60 days" written beside it. Many of these statistical responses would find their way into promotional materials for the radio series or as merchandising strategies for maximizing sales. This oft-repeated strategy involved each new market's premium and Safety Club membership statistics to be gathered and selectively incorporated into the campaign to sell sponsorship in the next market.[39]

While the practice of recycling statistics was largely motivated by the ever-expanding search for like-sponsors in non-competitive markets, it also had the added cumulative effect of discursively constructing (and repeatedly reconstructing) the Lone Ranger in the eyes of business leaders as an important sales agent for their products and King-Trendle as a dutiful product manager. This practice affected Lone Ranger's rise to iconic stature in the US, as it was first necessary to convince producers and manufacturers of its ubiquity. Once on board, these producers and

manufacturers contributed to the wealth of consumer goods sold under the Lone Ranger moniker, but it was the persistent internal recycling of success stories, sales statistics, and premium requests that helped establish the perception that the character was *already* an American business icon. To this effect, the concluding page of a1939 sales packet designed to sell *Lone Ranger* transcriptions states, "Jack Benny, Fred Allen, Phil Baker and Phillip Morris programs mention 'The Lone Ranger' and play upon the words 'Hi Yo Silver.'... National magazines such as NEW YORKER, JUDGE, LIFE and prominent radio journals quote in picture and in story of 'The Lone Ranger' and the cry, 'Hi Yo Silver.' No matter where you go, you'll hear remarks referring to the great radio character."[40]

Recycling publicity differed from the ways advertising agencies used premiums and other forms of audience measurement. While ad agencies certainly used giveaways to measure the audience and to promote the sponsor through licensed trade characters, they did not generally publicize their results, choosing to keep such information proprietary so that other competitive agencies and businesses could not copy successful strategies. Sehl Advertising, the first agency to create a Lone Ranger Safety Club, seemed perplexed when asked by King-Trendle for statistics on giveaways and club membership, stating "Don't know just how you

expect to use this material... all radio and broadcast publications have been calling on us for a full and complete story of the Lone Ranger. We have refused to give out any information, the Gordon Baking Company taking the stand that this is all of a private nature, of no concern to anyone else... due to the fact that the editors haven't access to exact figures, the articles never show up in our favor as strongly as they should. And this again bothers us very little, because these magazines are not read by the consumer."[41]

King-Trendle, however, saw tremendous advantage in publicizing the success sponsors had using its brand, since its audience was not the consumer, but precisely those other manufacturers and advertising agencies that Sehl and Gordon's wished to keep in the dark. Sponsors were attracted to the Lone Ranger brand because it helped foster closer relationships between manufacturers and retailers. As the Depression set in, manufacturers looked for any advantage they could muster to distinguish their products from those of their competitors. Retailers served as intermediaries in guiding consumers toward particular products. Due to increased competition for diminishing markets in the 1930s, retailer willingness to stock or prominently display one product over another took on added significance. From the start, the Lone Ranger's radio appeal

mattered most to Gordon's Bakery in terms of how this could be converted into grocers' stocking Silvercup Bread. As one ad aimed at this occupational community asks, "Who's asleep at the switch? Only the grocer who doesn't take advantage of this amazing radio advertising by *featuring* SILVERCUP in his store."[42] Licensed properties like the Lone Ranger became important sales tools for manufacturers in cultivating productive relationships with retailers, since they promised extra consumer interest for retailers.

As Cross has argued regarding toy sales during the Depression, manufacturers had to first win access to sales shelves from retailers before they could reach children. Branded products provided an important intervention. "The media personality put a 'child's friend' on an ordinary sand pail or pull toy. These toys stood out from the generic version and in effect sold themselves. Retailers then had an incentive to seek a specific line of goods... This gave manufacturers who used licensed characters leverage over store owners."[43]

King-Trendle assembled numerous manuals on how effectively to exploit *The Lone Ranger* program for "maximum retail results" and sales kits included detailed suggestions on how to "build up" the importance of merchandising product to retailers.[44] The procedures outlined in these

manuals reveal the extent to which licensors felt it necessary to train sponsors on how to properly utilize their properties. A section titled "Internal Propaganda" encouraged sponsors to meet with their employees and lecture them on securing new retailers and extra product orders to coincide with the radio series beginning in their market, or to announce of free giveaways. It also advised that sales staff should be taught how to secure prominent displays of goods in all retail outlets.[45] Sponsors were even cautioned to answer every fan letter because "every letter represents a family. Every family represents potential consumption of product."[46] Strategies for getting sales staff on board included playing a sample episode of the radio program "to give a definite idea of entertainment and use of commercials". Sales staffs were also encouraged to don Lone Ranger cowboy hats and greet retailers with the cry "Hi Yo Silver" as ways to build sales.[47]

While such suggestions ranged from the obvious to the ridiculous, they were intended to boost morale and help sellers distinguish themselves and their products in the eyes of retailers during a decade in which consumption of non-essentials radically declined and convincing grocers to stock products was often challenging. A letter from Lloyd George Venard, Director of Sales for station WCKY in Cincinnati, reporting on

the sales campaign on behalf of the Schultze Baking Company (a later Lone Ranger sponsor) attests to this inspirational function. Venard recounts, “We furnished cowboy entertainment and then played a transcription of the program after which we held a sales meeting which lasted until 12 o’clock and which did not drag for one minute. It was the most remarkable sales meeting I had ever seen because the officials of the Schultze outfit kept firing inspiration to an extremely responsive group of 100 salesmen.”[48]

Attracting retailer cooperation required sponsors to provide them with participation incentives. Not only were giveaways to be made available in local shops (with the explicit direction that items like The Lone Ranger Mask were “under no circumstances... to be given unless the product is bought”), but every retailer was also instructed that these free gifts were “his own give-away and not the sponsor’s.”[49] This masked the overt sales function of such premiums, but it also built goodwill for retailers, particularly with children, that then transferred into increased orders of sponsors’ products. Of course, the insistence that every mask be accounted for - “make it forcefully plain... the number of unsold products must correspond with the number of masks on hand” - also suggests a certain degree of mistrust between manufacturers and retailers that

licensors worked to mitigate through such detailed merchandising plans.[50] It also reveals the importance of accurate audience measurement for licensors and sponsors alike that giveaways were intended to furnish. As such, securing retailer cooperation became doubly important, as they served as both the point of product purchase and of audience interaction.

Aside from extending *The Lone Ranger* radio program into non-competitive markets, King-Trendle also expanded the brand's reach into other media. King-Trendle entered into a production deal with Republic Productions, Inc on June 22, 1937 to produce a 15-part film serial based on the licensor's Lone Ranger radio personality. The first installment was released in early 1938 and played a significant role in expanding the national reach of the property. Billed by Republic as the first movie serial to use a fictional character invented on radio, *The Lone Ranger* earned $594,137 at the box office (the 1939 sequel, *The Lone Ranger Rides Again*, earned $523,026), for which The Lone Ranger Inc received $18,750 up front plus 10 percent of all film rental fees once the film exceeded $390,000.[51] The actual revenue King-Trendle received for the film is difficult to measure, in part because the above-mentioned 10 percent came out of Republic's share of the profits, which was 60 percent

of the film rentals, the rest going to distributors and exhibitors. King-Trendle's revenue is estimated at around $60,000.[52]

Because Republic did not own distribution and exhibition outlets like the vertically integrated major studios, it relied heavily on pre-sold properties that would generate large audiences. As such, it was reluctant to release the Lone Ranger serial in markets where the radio series was not already being broadcast. As Trendle explained, "after we got the Republic production on the market, we found out from Republic that wherever the picture played, if there was no radio program, the picture died; and they were on our necks all the time to be ahead of the program with the radio program... we expanded the radio program just as rapidly as possible for our own selfish interests, but the Republic people withheld the release of their motion picture until after we got into the territory with the radio program, in order to boost their own grosses."[53] Since King-Trendle's profits were tied directly to film rentals, the company initiated a major campaign to license the radio series to independent radio stations across the US. Once again, though responding to external pressure, King-Trendle marshaled these efforts into developing detailed and integrated cross-marketing campaigns that sold local stations on the added promotional value of tying the series to the film serial release and vice-versa.

Michele Hilmes has argued that 1938 was the year that Hollywood and the broadcast networks finally achieved "cross-fertilization... on a multiplicity of levels, each contributing to the other in an increasingly symbiotic relationship."[54] Though the two media had shared resources for several years - borrowing story ideas and characters, adapting each other's works, publicizing each other's projects - Hilmes contends that the relationship had previously been hampered by film exhibitor complaints that radio was costing them patrons. Exhibitors pressured the studios to minimize their involvement with radio.[55] At the same time newspaper publishers, fearing lost advertising revenue to radio, also engaged in a smear campaign against radio programming while often refusing to publicize radio schedules.[56] Hilmes notes that these reactions were not uniform, and that many exhibitors saw radio as an effective local promotional tool, but she situates the primary cause for Hollywood-network symbiosis post-1938 in the telephone company's reduction of wire rates, which allowed for cheaper delivery of Hollywood fare.[57] While this is clearly an important factor, there is also a need to investigate the roles of licensing intermediaries in massaging local interests, paving the way for locally competitive media outlets to see the mutual benefit of promoting a like brand.

The same 1937 brochure that emphasized how easily Safety Club tie-ins could be reproduced across markets also stressed the importance of cross-marketing by announcing over a two page spread (these documents often unfolded from single covers to 2-page layouts to four-page layouts) that "Newspapers and Magazines tell of Lone Ranger's RADIO and MOVIE popularity."[58] The announcement actually predated the film serial's release in February 1938, already predicting its impact on increased sales.

Early cross-promotional efforts were often speculative and presumed that audiences would move between the different media out of sheer curiosity and without much directing from either sponsors or exhibitors. "Now, with Republic Corporation's 13 weeks movie serial, based upon WXYZ's original radio creation, it is reasonable to assume that the added interest to the radio programs will pave the way to publicity and will benefit all sponsors in all territories... due to nation-wide popularity of the radio feature people young and old who hear and have heard the radio programs will want to SEE it. And millions who SEE it on the screen will want to HEAR it on the air."[59]

Quickly, however, careful management of cross-promotion became an integral part of King-Trendle's procedure manuals for exploiting the

Lone Ranger for maximum retail results. By 1939, the coordination of local radio promotion with either Republic's *Lone Ranger* film releases (the second serial was released in 1939) or *The Lone Ranger* comic strip distributed by the King Features Syndicate was billed as affording "unusual opportunity for cooperative exploitation."[60] *The Lone Ranger* comic strip began September 1938 and by 1939 was being published in over 50 daily and 25 Sunday newspapers. By the early 1950s, this number would grow to 172 daily newspapers, 122 Sunday newspapers. Sponsors were encouraged to enlist film exhibitor support in featuring their products in connection with the film release and in setting up lobby displays in the theatre that plugged the radio program in exchange for special announcements over the radio alerting listeners to the film serial. King-Trendle reasoned, "If the radio station 'plugs' the movie and vice versa, the result will be added program interest for the sponsor; increased attendance at the theatre; and a final result of excellent audience gain for the station."[61] The manual even supplied sample copy on how radio station and film exhibitor could promote one another. Similarly, the manual "suggests" (the cover page explicitly instructed that all suggestions should be followed as outlined, since each step has been "tested and proven as workable and effective in any market") that newspaper publishers would

be willing to mention the radio program's airtime and station in a line above the comic strip in exchange for "cooperative mention of the comic in a special radio announcement."[62]

Finally, the manual encouraged sponsors to obtain free movie passes for their retailers in order to ensure their cooperation in cross-promoting the radio series and film.[63] While their participation might have seemed obvious since retailers were the final point of purchase and stood to gain from such promotions, this coordination strategy reveals the degree to which licensors understood that the sponsor's audience were the grocers who stocked their product and it was this intermediary consumer who had to be appeased before agreeing to help manufacturers reach larger markets. Left unmentioned is the added publicity generated for the licensor by getting media outlets to promote not one another, but their shared interest in King-Trendle's product. As Nicholas Sammond argues in his history of Disney, "the producer that could generate simultaneous advertisements, features, and reviews in local papers created the impression that its product was circulating on its own merits, having won a place in a network of common experience articulated in apparently separate locations within the community."[64]

Licensors also promoted the added value that their popular

properties could bring to local merchants, encouraging them to create window displays and take out newspaper advertisements that publicized their trade characters alongside the store. Once again, licensors relied on statistics that they could accumulate and disseminate in order to promote the cross-merchandise sales power of their characters. A 1938 internal sales promotion document for the Lone Ranger detailed how Gimbel Bros had taken out a 240-line ad in New York City newspapers and sold over 6000 Lone Ranger sun suits in 2 days, while W.T. Grant had placed 72 pairs of Lone Ranger shoes in each of its ten stores' window displays on a Monday morning and had none left at the end of the day. The promotional value of collecting this information is revealed by the bracketed inclusion that Mondays are "not a particularly good shopping day."[65]

Using somewhat circular logic, the document ended by stating that the most significant evidence of the selling power of the Lone Ranger was the fact that leading stores were spending $5000-$15,000 on Lone Ranger display materials.[66] In this manner, licensors worked to justify the selling power of their properties through logics that extrapolated individual instances of success into general merchandising principles while using internal industry sales as evidence of wider appeal. This further suggests that licensors saw their primary audience as other media and product

manufacturers and retailers, not actual consumers, but often conflated their markets, suggesting a correlation between retailers buying display items and anticipated retail sales. Significantly, the assembled list did not include actual sales figures to real customers, but merely stressed the range and number of product manufacturers seeking to exploit the property as evidence of The Lone Ranger's success.

To be certain, King-Trendle was not alone in developing these cross-promotional schemes. Walt Disney had begun selling Mickey Mouse dolls as early as 1930 to help subsidize his struggling animation studio. By 1932, the merchandising aspect of Disney's business had grown so large that it required a separate division to run it. Disney's head of merchandise licensing, Harry Kay Kamen, worked with merchants and theater owners throughout the 1930s, coordinating marketing efforts and synchronizing newspaper advertising with window displays. Like King-Trendle, Disney licensed hundreds of Mickey Mouse brand items; each designed to promote the other items as well as the Disney name, which appeared on all licensed items.[67] Disney was also adept at recycling publicity in order to generate excitement for its brand amongst new licensees and consumers. According to Sammond, "When the buzz caught, Disney could, like other companies, recirculate independent public commentary, acting as a sort of amplifier for

common sentiment."[68] Unlike King-Trendle, Disney's licensing efforts throughout the 1930s were primarily intended to direct attention to the films that Disney produced. For instance, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) merchandise was licensed in advance of the film release to build anticipation for the film.[69] By the end of the decade, the Lone Ranger texts served primarily to promote the brand and its licensed merchandise and products.

The successful use of premiums to measure audiences and tie-in sponsors led to the extension of licenses beyond radio sponsorship. Merchandising would become licensing's primary profit stream by the end of the 1930s, as manufacturers began seeking out trade characters as selling aids to bolster sales during the Depression. On May 23, 1938, *Advertising Age* announced that The Lone Ranger Inc was embarking on a "cooperative consumer advertising campaign" with 23 manufacturers all producing goods under the licensed title "trading post."[70] By February 1939, the number of product licensees had grown to sixty-two. [71] King-Trendle earned royalties ranging from 5-10 percent of gross receipts for each license.[72] By 1941, King-Trendle had negotiated an impressive 74 separate merchandising licenses for the Lone Ranger.[73] What all of these products shared was that they were cheap to manufacture, easily reproducible, and

primarily directed at children.

Manufacturers and advertisers had long found that sales to children (and their parents) increased when they attached particular personalities, drawn from comics and other popular entertainment forms, to their products. As Cross explains, "toymakers found that these characters evoked strong emotions in American parents and children and that these feelings sold toys. Fantasy playthings were closely linked with the emergence about 1900 of a national entertainment industry built around 'stars' and celebrity."[74] King-Trendle's efforts to license the Lone Ranger also relied upon selling potential media producers and merchandise manufacturers on the appeal of the brand to children and the power of children as sales agents. The company had to mitigate the targeting of children as a potential sales force with growing concerns over exploiting this audience, and with accusations lobbied against corporate manipulation of the radio public as a whole.

CHILDREN, BRANDING AND THE DEPRESSION

As unemployment rose from 1.55 million in 1929 (3.2 percent of the American workforce) to over 12.3 million in 1933 (24.9 percent), never dropping under 7.7 million (14.3 percent) throughout the 1930s,

American businesses were forced to seek new ways of selling not only goods, but also the virtue of consumption in an era of scarcity.[75] As Gary Cross argues, many Americans began to see continued displays of wealth and excess that had characterized the 1920s as un-American.[76] New approaches would be found in the coalescence of radio technologies, branding practices, and marketing directed at children. Combined, these sites would help many businesses recover both their profit margins and their public reputation, but they would also open up new concerns, particularly over the exploitation of children.

While many businesses were hit hard during the Depression, radio blossomed. Providing a cheap means of entertainment and information, radio sales actually doubled between 1929-1933.[77] Many corporations initially turned to radio in the 1930s as means of publicly combating President Roosevelt's New Deal policies. Their polemical attacks on the federal government's recovery policies did not always ingratiate them with suffering listeners. As William Bird summarizes:

> Business leaders demonstrated neither patience nor skill, other than in the scheduling of talks. It was left to their advertising, public relations, and network program builders to channel business's inclination to react into a drama of substitution. The popularity of New Deal liberalism, they patiently explained, required that business abandon rhetorical one-upmanship for a selfless expression of social

> purpose… Insularity and self-interest undermined business's attack upon the anti-corporate features of the New Deal... because it failed to frame business's interests and activities in terms of the hopes and aspirations of the American people.[78]

Roland Marchand argues that by the 1930s, advertising agencies believed that the public was better reached through entertainment than edification and that promotion should be conducted through showmanship.[79] Radio became a key commercial site for promoting a "culture of abundance" through the distribution of "cheap luxuries" and for telling stories that "created a need for products largely through an appeal to a mythical past - lost community, lost intimacy, lost self-assurance."[80] As Kate Lacey articulates, social attitudes as expressed through mass media "stressed the need for self-reliance, abstinence from the stressful distractions of modern urban life, and a return to a more 'wholesome' community life," but that these nostalgic images and messages were filtered through consumer culture's "production of compensatory desires."[81]

While radio programs targeted consumers of all ages and persuasions, one group that was especially identified was children. As Gary Cross argues, by the 1930s, advertisers learned that children were attentive and loyal listeners and thus excellent targets for commercial messages.[82] In

addition, the Depression had pushed many adolescents into the workforce. Many 10-12-year-old boys now earned extra money at part-time jobs, a portion of which could be spent on cheap toys and other consumer goods marketed directly to them by enterprising manufacturers.[83] While marketing to and through children had been common practice among toy manufacturers since the early 1900s, it accelerated during the 1930s.[84]

As personal consumption of toys dropped from estimated $336 million in 1929 to $181 million in 1933 and at least 96 different toy makers went out of business, enterprising firms turned not only to radio, but celebrity culture in general to give them an added boost.[85] Cross notes, "The key to the fantasy toy was that it embodied the story and image of a celebrity... marketed directly to children through new media like comic books and radio... generic toys and dolls became 'name branded'... sales increased when buyers identified products with attractive 'personalities,' and these personalities in turn became the subjects of toys."[86] While sponsors typically tied premiums into radio plots, toy and other manufacturers did not have to be so literal. This environment was conducive for licensors like King-Trendle to extend the Lone Ranger brand across a wide swath of pre-existing products that gained added value simply by adorning the character's name and/or image. *The Lone*

Ranger radio series became a promotional vehicle for the myriad licensed products bearing his brand insignia, rather than the other way around.

Cross effectively argues though that children's radio was not merely a conduit for licensing products, but fundamentally reshaped toy culture by providing a story backdrop into which products could be fit. "It shaped the toy culture by introducing play narratives that were designed specifically for children and that required toys to serve as props for the re-enactment of radio storylines."[87] Beyond play narratives, branded toys allowed children to live vicariously through their heroes, gaining aspects of the star's persona by acquiring their accessories. "These playthings often gave the owner something that the star had - the gun, rocket, decoder, hair bow, or just the 'look' of the personality. By possessing a celebrity toy the child owned a bit of the spunk, charm, power, or even good luck of the character... but these personalities did far more than endorse toys. Their heroism became an integral part of the toy itself when the boy was invited to take the role of the hero in fighting the bad guys."[88]

It was the branded toy's ability to embody the Lone Ranger's personality that made it appealing, but also an object of great concern for its ability to exploit children's culture through its overt commercial function and to impart the wrong values. Summarizing Helen and Robert

Lynd's 1929 sociological study of Muncie, Indiana, labeled Middletown, America because of its "average" white, middle-class profile, Sammond articulates the growing concern over the mass media's interference in child rearing during this era. "Through its integration into a rapidly coalescing national network of mass media, [Lynd and Lynd, in their study of Middletown] argued, the ideal American middle class was confronting a loss of control over the means of enculturating their children."[89]

Interestingly, these concerns were felt equally within corporate offices and by their commercial partners, the advertising agencies and mass media outlets, as well as by concerned parents, consumer advocates, and government regulators. While Marchand contends that the Parable of the Captivated Child, which suggested that mothers must become deft manipulators in order to get children to consume appropriate and healthy foods, was heavily endorsed by the advertising industry during the 1930s, such manipulations could take on potentially negative connotations when filtered through improperly managed branded personalities. [90]

Licensors like King-Trendle positioned themselves as both cross-merchandising and morality managers for their personality properties (see Lone Ranger Safety Club case study below). However, for large media

corporations such as the Chicago Tribune Syndicate, for whom licensing was merely an ancillary profit generator and who rarely exerted much direct control over how sponsors used their product nor tried to coordinate image marketing across licenses, curtailing personality problems would prove more difficult. In particular, the Chicago Tribune Syndicate often had a difficult time reeling in the political visions of its creative personnel, which led to different media outlets featuring the same property working at cross purposes.

THE CONFLICTED CAREER OF LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE

A telling example from this era is the *Little Orphan Annie* comic strip created by Harold Gray. An archconservative, Gray vehemently opposed FDR's New Deal legislation. Gray used his comic strip to wage an open attack on the government, while singing the praises and virtues of industry. Throughout 1934-1935, the serialized adventures focused on the trials and troubles of Annie's benevolent benefactor, Daddy Warbucks. In the strip, Warbucks faced trumped up charges of tax evasion orchestrated by a government eager to make an example of the wealthy philanthropist (even though they secretly admitted that they knew he was innocent). Reviews appearing in *Time Magazine*, *The New Republic*, and *The Nation* pointedly accused the cartoonist of propagandizing.[91] On September 9,

1935, *Time Magazine* reprinted an editorial by the publisher of the Huntington, West Virginia *Herald-Dispatch*, a self-identified progressive conservative, calling the strip a "vehicle for a studied, veiled, and alarmingly vindictive propaganda" promoting "rugged individualism."[92] The publisher asserted, "The creator of the comic strip *Little Orphan Annie* has violated his sacred reader trust... In the latest instance, all political leaders, and it follows every public official, are at once indicted as 'crooks' and to accept such a sweeping indictment is to permit the creator of *Little Orphan Annie*... and Chicago's Tribune Syndicate, to attack and condemn all persons, all institutions, and all ideas save those they choose to label acceptable."[93] *The New Republic* warned that the strip is "distributed to 135 daily and 100 Sunday papers, and thence to millions of citizens" and, more alarmingly, "has its greatest influence on the youngsters, the voters of the next generation."[94]

When threats of pro-business propaganda directed toward children led several newspapers, including the *Herald-Dispatch*, to cease printing the comic strip, the Chicago Tribune Syndicate quickly issued a statement that Gray had been ordered by them to stop editorializing and get back to entertaining.[95] Gray would continue to push the boundaries of acceptable political discourse in his strip throughout the Depression (and beyond),

regularly engaging in a battle-of-wills with Annie's licensor over how to maximize both profits and pro-business goodwill.

Whereas Gray's comic strip had been accused of being too overtly political, radio concerns drifted more toward inappropriate content of a different sort: the kind that either (over) exploited children's innocence for commercial gain or left children "on the verge of hysteria."[96] In a February 9, 1933 memo, Enid Beaupre, NBC's standards and practices monitor for children's programming, noted that the network had received telephone complaints that "some of the incidents [on *Little Orphan Annie*] had been disturbing enough to make children almost hysterical," adding that such practices on behalf of the series' sponsor, the Wander Company-makers of Ovaltine malted milk, were "incongruous for a product supposed to soothe nerves and induce restful sleep to be promoted by the very means to defeat its purpose."[97] In a February 10, 1933 follow up memo, Beaupre suggested that this is perhaps "a new way of selling Ovaltine," sarcastically pointing to the unethical economics of scaring children so as to then sell the sponsor's product that was intended to relax them.[98]

Despite, or perhaps in response to, these accusations on July 12, 1938, Blackett-Sample-Hummert (BSH), Wander's advertising agency

and the producers of the series, issued a protest of its own to NBC over the "blood and thunder tactics used in child radio."[99] While BSH's real intentions were to attack the merchandising strategies of another children's series, *Terry and the Pirates*, whose sponsor directly competed with Orphan Annie's, the argument and evidence it presented drew a clear correlation between the economic value of licensed properties and the need to project the right moral values. Objecting to the tactics of *Terry and the Pirates* "for selfish reasons, as well as moral reasons," BSH bluntly stated, "This is another instance where 'good morals' are 'good business.' If the broadcasting companies do not bring the offenders into line, parents' resentment may be aroused to the point where they will demand that the Federal Communication Commission intervene."[100]

Of course, this did not prevent manufacturers, sponsors, agencies, and networks from pursuing the children's market; it merely demanded that such pursuits be justified on moral and educational grounds, and not merely commercial terms. Hence, licensors worked to alleviate anxieties over exploitation by demonstrating to their clients that their properties also taught important moral lessons and instilled good character values. In other words, licensors made their clients feel as though it was all right to sell directly to children so long as what was being sold had moral, not

merely financial, value. By keeping the child's best interests in mind (at least rhetorically), licensors both demonstrated their own ability to balance consumer and cultural concerns and proved their right to claim the mantle of cultural intermediaries between consumers and producers.

Sammond's analysis of Disney in the 1930s reveals how the company carefully positioned itself as bridging commercial and moral values through its products. "But behind the company's skill at producing popular, well-made cartoons, is also demonstrated an impressive ability to align itself, its founder, and its products with prevailing discourses about an ideal American culture, and to suggest that Disney was actually purposely contributing to the national good."[101] Cross similarly contends that Disney was careful to license only appropriate merchandise -- rejecting, for example, a Mickey Mouse ashtray, regardless of how much money it might have brought them, because it projected the wrong company image vis-à-vis children.[102] Much as I have demonstrated King-Trendle's licensing practices as aligning with Disney's business brand exploitation model in the previous section, I contend that King-Trendle also justified the Lone Ranger's economic value in terms of the brand's ability to teach children good moral values and its own role in the

licensing process as arbiter against moral infractions by teaching licensees how *properly* to use the brand.

As previously stated, *The Lone Ranger* was marketed initially to children because they were envisioned as a less discerning audience who would ignore low-budget production values in favor of the exciting plots. Additionally, as an October 14, 1939 *Saturday Evening Post* article bluntly stated, "Trendle believed that most parents buy advertised products because their kids coax them into it."[103] It is also apparent, however, that its creators were concerned that the direct appeal to children be tempered by the character's good moral virtues. Responding to Striker's initial vision of the Lone Ranger as a misunderstood anti-hero, fashioned on Jesse James, Jewell corrected, "I realize this is good theatre, but the bosses want the Lone Ranger more of a hero for the children to pattern after. We are going to publicize the fact that the Ranger is a Tom Mix type - always doing good, never doing wrong."[104]

King-Trendle's efforts to find sponsorship for *The Lone Ranger* also involved selling the program's appeal to children, while rendering such sales initiatives morally acceptable to parents and other public officials. For example, accompanying the declaration that 24,607 letters had been received responding to the Lone Ranger pistol give-away is a

drawing of a family gathered around a radio. The family's dress and appearance signify their upper-middle class white status, with the well-dressed parents standing behind the radio, father smiling, mother looking downward contentedly at her two boys, who seem captivated by the device. The younger child, dressed in a sailor's outfit popular among middle-class families in the era, looks up and off into the distance, deep in imagination, while the older child, dressed in a black suit, has his back turned to the reader as he looks directly at the radio. In all, the four figures and the machine complete the family circle, while their proximity to the device conveys the medium's intimate space in the home lives of middle-class Americans. Adjacent to this image is a thunderbolt with the words "Michigan Radio Network" striking a bulls-eye dead in the center, suggesting that the letter frenzy successfully indicated that the regional network has a large audience, and it appeals to the correct target audience as well, namely white, middle-class Michiganites, and especially children (with the loving approval of their parents). [See Image #2]

LONE RANGER SAFETY CLUB

Efforts to align the Lone Ranger brand's moral and economic values with both corporate interests in and parental concerns over children

and consumerism were concentrated in the careful development of Lone Ranger Safety Clubs in the local communities' where *The Lone Ranger* radio program could be heard. Safety Clubs were promoted by King-Trendle to various sponsors as valuable ways to measure the size of their audience, establish better relations with local retailers, and cultivate indirect and positive publicity through their endorsement of civic responsibility through teaching children about traffic safety. Lone Ranger Safety Clubs also offset concerns over exploiting children by refocusing attention away from products that bore the brand's name onto the moral values the Lone Ranger brand advocated. In an era where corporations faced both mounting pressure from the federal administration through New Deal legislation and public mistrust over their continued avocation of consumerism even in the face of rising unemployment, Lone Ranger Safety Clubs were designed to offer pro-business alternatives to New Deal legislation disguised as apolitical lessons about codes of conduct (especially when crossing the street) and patriotic rhetoric about the great American heritage. While Lone Ranger Safety Clubs were designed with sponsor interests in mind, they also provided King-Trendle with added revenue streams and were a way to create fan communities that exceeded beyond the radio program and who were focused primarily on the Lone

Ranger brand's inspirational personality. Lone Ranger Safety Clubs transformed the relationship between merchandise and text, as the radio program became a means to extend and promote the brand, not vice-versa (though, if successful, each branded product, including the radio program, promoted the other).

The Lone Ranger Safety Club was not unique. Many brands directed at children tried to tap into the popularity of burgeoning boys' and girls' clubs that were popping up all over the country, because they offered organized communities of potential consumers that sponsors could address indirectly by promoting activities built around the brand. Sammond reveals that as early as 1930, Disney " attempted to join the network of clubs and organizations to which children belonged, creating the Mickey Mouse Club, precursor to the company's famous television program two decades later."[105] Similarly, Little Orphan Annie, Jack Armstrong, and almost every other radio personality whose sponsor targeted children had some sort of club that listeners could join. Where the Lone Ranger Safety Club differed from these others was both in its inexhaustibility (whereas Disney abandoned the first Mickey Mouse Club by 1933 and Little Orphan Annie had disappeared from the airwaves by 1942, the Lone Ranger Safety Club still boasted membership in the

millions well into the early 1950s) and in its ultimate focus on the brand rather than any specific products it sold. While Disney's club was designed to get children into the theaters to watch the studio's films and Little Orphan Annie used club membership to generate sales for Ovaltine by tying club activities in with sponsored products, the Lone Ranger Safety Club mentioned sponsors only indirectly and almost never promoted particular products as the locus of club activities.

The first Lone Ranger Safety Club began October 14, 1935 and was sponsored by Gordon Bakeries and implemented by Gordon's advertising agency, Sehl Advertising. It is unclear how much King-Trendle might have influenced Sehl and Gordon's initial Safety Club initiative, though the idea of a Lone Ranger club had been bandied about since before the radio series debuted. Letters between Fran Striker and James Jewell confirm that The Lone Ranger was indeed targeted to children, in particular fourteen and fifteen year-olds, and that from a very early stage, the possibilities for cultivating and effectively measuring this audience were conceptualized in terms of socially engineering fan communities built around the character's cult of personality. As Striker wrote on January 6, 1933, "I think there will be splendid possibilities in this character of the Lone Ranger and plan to establish him similar to

Warner Lester [the protagonist in Striker's crime drama, *Manhunter*], as the one that is hunted by the law, and yet loved by the oppressed... the thought struck me as I was writing the play that you might organize a LONE RANGER CLUB of boys, and ask them to write in for their membership cards, etc." Striker's very next sentence establishes the connection between such a fan club and the potential for commercial exploitation. "There might be good commercial possibilities too, for a concern that is selling something that is designed especially for growing boys, clothes, breakfast food, or something of that sort."[106]

Gordon and Sehl saw the club as a way of gauging the size of its audience by encouraging write-ins to MRN radio stations for membership cards. They also saw the club as fostering good business relations with local retailers to whom they supplied baked goods. Pledge cards were made available only at participating groceries, both necessitating point-of-purchase contact between child consumers and retailers and providing a valuable sales incentive for manufacturers seeking to attract new retailers to stock their products. In this manner, the Lone Ranger Safety Club was designed to appeal to children consumers through exclusive giveaways and also to activate children as a potential sales force. King-Trendle would recycle both of those ideas in its merchandising campaigns to attract local

and regional sponsors in non-competing markets. Sponsors were strongly encouraged not only to launch the clubs but also to invest resources in starting up neighborhood versions, which would "intensify the club spirit" and "furnish a means of added sales strength to retailers in each zone."[107]

Sehl objected to its promotional efforts being claimed by King-Trendle. Indeed, he stated, "if I read the third paragraph of the contract correctly, it would seem that the Famous Artists Syndicate [who licensed celebrity images of John Wayne, Clyde Beatty, Mickey Rooney amongst others, under the promotional banner of 'Hitch your product to a star,' and were briefly sub-contracted by King-Trendle to do the same for the Lone Ranger] have the authority to put other manufacturers in a position where they would reap the benefits of the great popularity of the Lone Ranger - and, of course, you know who has popularized him and spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in so doing [a reference to Sehl's client, Gordon Bakeries]."[108] Legally, however, their hands were tied, since all of the promotional efforts had been copyrighted in King-Trendle's name.

The licensor's incorporation of the Lone Ranger brand name a mere month prior to the Safety Club launch allowed King-Trendle to claim its sponsor's promotional efforts as its own and recycle the initiative in every new market it sought to extend the Lone Ranger brand. King-

Trendle developed a pre-packaged sales strategy that could be used interchangeably by different sponsors operating in competing areas, yet targeting similar consumers. Though sponsors benefited financially, the Lone Ranger Safety Clubs actually were designed to deflect attention away from sales efforts directed at children, and provided sponsors associative value instead by promoting the corporation's civic-mindedness. Safety Clubs supported traffic safety by encouraging boys and girls to form local clubs and earn Lone Ranger citations. Exploitation strategies devised by King-Trendle encouraged sponsors to get local authorities to endorse the initiative (and, indirectly, the sponsor). This strategy made additional sense in an era prior to national sponsorship, when the Lone Ranger was primarily licensed to local and regional sponsors, mostly bakeries, whose sales strategies often included home delivery and partnerships with local retailers, making them visible members of many of the communities in which their products were sold.

In a 1939 manual he put together, entitled "The Lone Ranger: Details of Procedure in Handling the Exploitation of the Program for Maximum Retail Results," Trendle devoted several pages of ideas to maximizing the positive publicity the Safety Club might generate for sponsors. Among them are instructions to "Enlist support of local

authorities on safety, such as Mayor, Chief of Police, Superintendent of Schools" as well as pre-packaged publicity, in which sponsors merely had to plug in interchangeable community leaders:

> LONE RANGER Wins Praise
>
> ... Parents, educators, and others keenly interested in children's radio programs have been quick to recognize the healthful influence of this great radio feature which now is broadcast coast to coast...
> Among those who have commented on the outstanding nature of THE LONE RANGER have been John Doe, Superintendent of Schools of _____, Richard Blank, President of _____ Chamber of Commerce; Mrs. Jane Roe, President of _____ Women's Club; and Mrs. John Jones, Chairman of the Parent-Teacher Association.[109]

The effectiveness of privileging civic duty over commercial sales and then garnering official support from local authorities for these initiatives can be summarized by a January 11, 1941 article in *The New Republic*, which extolled King-Trendle's socially valuable achievements. "The Safety Clubs give the necessary check on popularity and secure the type of local support for which publicity men give their shirts. The mayor or at least the local police chief will always sound off for safety, sales of

(insert name of product) go up, and accidents go down in the community. 'Hi Yo, Silver! Away...!'"[110]

Safety Club merchandising suggestions also avoided promoting the initiative as primarily a sales generator, and instead described it as "an organization for boys and girls which promotes safety and builds character."[111] Though licensors were eager to sell potential sponsors on the power of personality to attract consumers, particularly children, they were equally anxious to reassure clients that the cult of personality could actually impart important moral lessons to youngsters that built character. King-Trendle included the story of the Lone Ranger's first public appearance in a Detroit parade in its promotional packet for potential sponsors. Under the heading "POPULARITY - THAT CANNOT BE BOUGHT AT ANY PRICE," the licensor explained how thousands of children in the crowd broke through the guards and disrupted the festivities for two hours in their efforts to see and touch the Lone Ranger. While this story provided tangible evidence of the brand's popularity, and therefore its sales appeal, it also raised the specter of unruly children disrespecting authority that businesses, especially those reliant upon local community support, could ill afford to be associated with. Thus, the story concluded by reassuring potential sponsors that even though the Lone

Ranger's popularity excited the crowd, it also was the only force capable of restoring order. "The police were able to reform the parade only because the children's beloved radio hero directed them to their places."[112] A powerful personality could command obedience, and if employed correctly, could work to teach proper "moral values," such as respect for authority.

Sponsors often employed similar justifications for commercially exploiting the Lone Ranger's personality to children. On October 29, 1937, the Emil Reinhardt Advertising Agency wrote to King-Trendle on behalf of their client, Kilpatrick's bakery, which had just launched the Safety Club. Reporting a membership of 49,000, the agency boasted "many, many letters from parents tell us they do not dare buy any other bread because of the children's demand for Kilpatrick's." The very next sentence immediately tempered the Safety Club's sales appeal by couching its value, as well as the value of the radio program, in moral terms. "We have received many letters from parents approving the program. Many others thank us for the lessons in character building which The Lone Ranger seems to impart to the youngsters in painless but highly effective manner."[113]

Beyond redressing commercial value in civic terms, the promotion of traffic safety seemed largely apolitical, allowing sponsors to appear as good citizens without having to address their on-going feud with FDR. In an era when many corporations were heavily scrutinized by the federal government and consumer advocates alike, promoting an image of community service through sponsorship of the Lone Ranger and his Safety Club helped offset accusations of greed and claims that businesses were out of touch with consumer needs and concerns. It also re-framed the terrain of struggle away from national opposition between corporations and government toward local partnerships between the two.

While appearing on the surface to be "blandly civic," Lone Ranger Safety Clubs often indirectly promoted private enterprise as inherently American.[114] For instance, the 1939 Safety Club Manual produced for Weber's Bread makes several references to the Lone Ranger's desire for boys and girls to "grow up to be happy, healthy and useful citizens" and is filled with patriotic content, including the reprinting of the words to The Star-Spangled Banner and extolling that "Almost everything this country has is the result of people pulling together for good and worthy causes."[115] Yet, what sort of citizenship did the Safety Club advocate? Decidedly, it endorsed one that limited federal intervention; encouraged local,

communal, and individual initiatives; and praised the historic role that free enterprise and corporate sponsorship have played promoting progress.

While Daniel Czitrom has argued that media constructs contemporary needs through nostalgic appeals to a mythical past, William Bird has pointed to the ways that American corporations during the Depression sought to invoke a "usable past" in order to justify their continued appeals for consumption in the face of economic hardship. "A usable past... animated business leaders' talks to the public... in 1935, General Foods' Colby M. Chester, [the National Association of Manufacturers] newly elected President, likened the partnership of labor, the investor and the consuming public to the 'adventurous pioneers' of Jamestown and Plymouth, who wrestled civilization from the wilderness and built institutions to match. 'They came,' Chester explained, 'in search of liberty, of freedom for intolerable restrictions'. The story of business, Chester concluded, was the story of America."[116] Corporations stressed the historic continuity between the growth of the American corporation and America itself, with the Depression as an anomaly that would be countered so long as the market was left free to pursue its natural course. A 1936 *Time Magazine* article summarized these efforts by describing a recent pro-business advertising campaign:

> "What Is Your America All About?" blazed the copy, adding apologetically, "You probably know every single fact in this advertisement." Most people indeed did. A box headed "You are a stockholder in the United States Inc." related that the country had produced three times as much wealth since the Revolution as the entire world had produced prior to 1776; that the US worker's share of the national income had risen from 38% in 1850 to 65% in 1929; that there were 44,000,000 savings accounts in the US even in the Depression. These and other facts, read the advertisement, reached "right into the very roots of your own life - and your family - and your future," were as "deep, as abiding, as encompassing as hunger, love, religion."[117]

Similarly, Lone Ranger Safety Clubs confirmed that their hero's mission began when **"**The West of old was fraught with dangers of many kinds: highwaymen, land sharks and roving bands of outlaws were found everywhere. This condition was, in large measure, due to the fact that the US government was unable to establish army posts except in strategic places, because of lack of funds."[118] The Lone Ranger Safety Clubs grounded their public service mission squarely within a history of corporate support for easing the transition to modernity for local communities. Where the government was unable to help local communities grow, corporations could. Without ever directly attacking the New Deal, The Lone Ranger Safety Club offers an alternative vision of American citizenship - one that stressed individual efforts, emphasized

safeguarding home and community, and embedded in a complicated and paternalistic relationship between corporate sponsors and local governments. The stress on individual responsibility, local community, and corporate stewardship all advocated, though indirectly, for Americans to pull together without government intervention.

The Safety Clubs promoted civic participation as rooted in individual, rather than collective, action. Traffic safety was positioned as entirely the responsibility of individual children, not rooted in the need for safer automobiles built by corporations or stricter government regulations for drivers. After providing shocking statistics about automobile-related deaths, the Safety Guide argued "COURTESY PREVENTS ACCIDENTS. So lets be courteous - everyone of us - all the time!" and then resorted to scare tactics, scolding, "How would you feel, Safety Ranger, if it was copying your careless dash into the street playing, or some other thoughtless action, that caused one of these smaller boys or girls to be injured or killed? ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT YOUR CARELESS EXAMPLE MAY CAUSE A SMALLER CHILD'S INJURY OR DEATH! PLAY SAFE FOR THE SAKE OF OTHERS."[119]

Tellingly, the organization of neighborhood Safety Clubs also took on decidedly corporate structures. Under the heading, Constitution and

By-Laws, the guide explained, "at the first meeting a *temporary* chairman and secretary should be elected. Regular officers would not be elected until after the constitution is formed and adopted... all future business of your club will be managed by these laws."[120] Further along, the guide proposes "although it is not necessary for a club to adopt a regular order of business, most clubs do follow a regular business procedure in order to save time and effort."[121] The use of titles such as "chairman," and "secretary" and the reference to Club activities as "business" requiring efficient time and work management clearly position Safety Ranger activities within corporate management hierarchies and procedures.

While it is perhaps an exaggeration to suggest that the Lone Ranger Safety Clubs were explicitly designed to promote corporate propaganda, it is fair to suggest that King-Trendle was interested in making its property both attractive to corporate sponsorship and appealing to radio stations fearing the FCC's "raised eyebrow." In the process, King-Trendle sought to construct the Lone Ranger as a powerful yet indirect sales agent. The summary to the Lone Ranger exploitation manual plainly states that the steps outlined for effectively maximizing the character's merchandising potential, including launching the Lone Ranger Safety Club, were devised "to make the Lone Ranger program series a profitable

investment and a source of pride to the radio stations selected to carry the feature" and help sponsors, ad agencies and radio stations work together in "a plan of exploitation best suited to conditions governing the market."[122] These conditions included threats of government regulation for manufacturers and broadcasters, public mistrust of corporate pro-consumption advocacy, and a need to tap into newly emergent markets through sales strategies that imbued products with extra personality value.

Not only did King-Trendle use the Safety Clubs as a lure for sponsors, but the licensor also profited handsomely from all of the extra premiums and promotional materials that sponsors had to order as part of the package, including Lone Ranger pledge cards, badges, merit citations, and Safety Club guide books. In each instance, King-Trendle would issue a non-exclusive license to a manufacturer and collect a 5-10 percent royalty on a sponsor's order. While King-Trendle supplied commercial typescripts for sponsors to use in promoting the Safety Club, personalized Lone Ranger announcements were also sold to sponsors as separate special script recordings, both ensuring extra profits for The Lone Ranger Inc., and complete control over the tone of the commercials.

Perhaps the greatest reward King-Trendle received, however, was the free publicity Safety Club materials generated for the Lone Ranger

brand. Radio sponsors paid all expenses for a promotional campaign that only indirectly marketed their product and only tangentially involved the radio program. Lone Ranger Safety Clubs used radio announcements on *The Lone Ranger* series to promote club activities, such as awarding merit badges for doing something traffic-safety related or directing members to retailers where they could pick up free Safety Club paraphernalia (also, conveniently, those retailers who stocked the sponsor's products), but the Safety Club rarely promoted the radio series in return. Sponsors were willing to foot the bill because it provided good public relations and offset any negative attention that might have resulted from their product targeting children.

The benefits for the licensor were far greater though, since the Safety Club ostensibly promoted an all-inclusive fantasy world where children could interact with the Lone Ranger, generating a friendly environment for all merchandise and media that might bear the brand's name. In much the same way that Sammond describes Disney's overall goal to "maximize its presence in the daily practices of average people," King-Trendle used the Lone Ranger Safety Club as a habit-forming fan community that routinized children's encounters with their hero and elevated those encounters to more than opportunities for entertainment or

play.[123] This, in turn, justified the endless consumption of Lone Ranger products as a character building, albeit commercial, intertext.[124] The Lone Ranger's face on a pail may have boosted sales for toy manufacturers, but it also offered the possibility of teaching children important lessons about heroism and virtue because the Lone Ranger's image - and all it stood for - might be embodied by the child's use of that item.

The Lone Ranger Safety Club guide answered the important question of "Who is The Lone Ranger?" with "he has thousands of friends, due to the fine work he carries on in the cause of justice. His chief friends, aside from Tonto and Silver, are the boys and girls of America."[125] The guide then reminded Safety Rangers "the pledge you sign is an indication of character - a promise to yourself of courageous living and thinking. It is a belief in the right way to do things, as exemplified by The Lone Ranger." Almost as an afterthought, the guide also offered that in choosing to join, "there are, of course, many thrilling and pleasant activities to be considered as well."[126]

Arguing that powerful personalities could instill healthy values in children, commercial announcements for the Lone Ranger Safety Clubs explicitly sold a fantasy friendship with the Lone Ranger as a character building experience. In one radio commercial (supplied to sponsors for an

extra fee), the Lone Ranger spoke directly to children, personally asking each child to join his club: “In fact, I must have you all as working partners, or I will surely fail. And boys and girls, I don’t want to fail – you don’t want me to fail either.”[127] Continuing, the Lone Ranger then described the qualities Safety Club member possessed, equating these characteristics with the heroism exhibited by Americans of yesteryear. “Lone Ranger Safety Club members are brave, upright, honorable, and worthy of being Safety Club members... we want our club... your club and mine... to carry on with the courageous spirit of the sturdy pioneers of the Old West.”[128] In this manner, King-Trendle sought to argue that *The Lone Ranger* offered inspirational leadership for youngsters, with adventure and fantasy mere byproducts. Moreover, by devising merchandising and exploitation manuals that provided sponsors with step-by-step instructions on how to develop the Lone Ranger Safety Club, King-Trendle sold itself as an intermediary that arbitrated sales to children with moral education through the brand management it coordinated.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have argued that shifting marketing practices and accompanying moral and economic anxieties felt within the cultural

industries shaped the ways properties like the Lone Ranger and Little Orphan Annie were sold to potential sponsors and constructed for particular audiences. In part, I have argued that strategies of recycling and cross-merchandizing that emerged out of King-Trendle's need to sell *The Lone Ranger* market-by-market as well as across merchandising and media terrains contributed to industry perceptions that the property was a sales phenomenon that, in turn, contributed to increased cultural circulation. Moreover, King-Trendle marketed *The Lone Ranger* as a bridge between competing industries and media and as a relationship builder between sales staff and retailers. In order to do so, King-Trendle positioned itself as a merchandising manager, creating a detailed exploitation manual and using recycled statistical data to prove the selling power of their brand. Recycling sales statistics and creating merchandising campaigns were also integral to King-Trendle's need to produce tangible evidence of the selling potential of their otherwise intangible property. Moreover, such materials also solidified the licensor's managerial authority over the brand, allowing King-Trendle to control how the brand was marketed while foregrounding the company's oversight role as a vital component for exploiting the brand. These documents suggested that without King-Trendle's careful management the brand could not be

properly exploited, and thus, they sutured the Lone Ranger property's value to the licensor's authorial role in shaping it.

The Depression also required American businesses to rethink their marketing strategies. Many began targeting children directly. Others simply sought to overcome negative publicity that posited they were out of touch with the needs and economic circumstances of the general population. Personality became a sales tool that could bolster sales to children and also put a positive spin on continued corporate support for consumption even in hard times. Personality was also a potentially dangerous force for the same reasons (as evidenced by public outcry over Gray's propagandizing through his *Little Orphan Annie* comic strip). As children became commodities exchanged within cultural production contexts, King-Trendle worked to both sell the Lone Ranger's cult of personality as key to attracting the child consumer, but also to imbue their property with the 'right' moral values. Selling to children became justifiable only if what was being sold would also build character or teach important moral lessons. Once again, King-Trendle used this cultural concern to foreground its authorial role in creating and managing the Lone Ranger formula, ensuring that it struck the proper balance between commercial and civic values. This was particularly important given the

dispersal of actual writers working in different cultural production sites who contributed to producing Lone Ranger radio, film, comic book, comic strip and other texts. King-Trendle solidified its brand ownership by elevating the formula's authorship over any of these individual texts and by claiming managerial authority based on moral and financial concerns that other producers might misappropriate the formula.

Still, character building needed to be commensurate with corporate notions of citizenship, which encouraged consumption, individualism, and self-reliance, over thrift, collectivism, and government assistance. Lone Ranger Safety Clubs seamlessly linked consumption with citizenship through the Lone Ranger's civic mission and upstanding character. Coupled with the recycling strategies and centralized management that King-Trendle utilized, by decade's end *The Lone Ranger* had gained a significant reputation within the cultural industries and amongst sponsors as a morally upright salesman for corporate capitalism. By shifting attention away from sponsored products, the Lone Ranger Safety Clubs also worked to habitualize children's encounters with their hero in ways that promoted the brand as existing separately from, but also embodying, the myriad licensed merchandise that bore his name. This, in turn, would establish several early parameters for the creation of fan-communities

centered on commercial intertexts that characterizes contemporary media production efforts. The property was thus poised for national sponsorship and an expanding notion of American consumer-citizen identity integration as America entered World War II. As shifting definitions of copyright coupled with efforts by others to capitalize on the goodwill generated by the Lone Ranger's personality emerged, King-Trendle also would also face its first serious legal challenges to its ownership rights over the brand.

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1. Jim Harmon, The Great Radio Heroes, revised edition (Jefferson: McFarland and Company, 2001).
2. I use the word "pioneering" in quotation marks because Trendle often referred to his efforts in these self-aggrandizing terms, making his work seem visionary rather motivated by immediate needs and operating conditions.
3. I am using the term "rehearsed" instead of "invented" or "introduced" because I do not want to make claims of origination. Trendle was not the only licensor of his day, nor was he the first. He was, perhaps, one of the most prolific and dedicated though. As such, I argue that it is less important to identify who invented these processes, as it is to analyze how they were developed and practiced by those who believed most strongly in them. Through his rehearsal of these brand management practices (regardless of whether he invented them or not), Trendle both refined and routinized them, marking his work as significant to future developments.
4. See TLS Jewell to Striker, February 15, 1933 AND TLS, Striker to Jewell, February 20, 1933.
5. Striker also wrote and/or supervised the writing of all twelve Lone Ranger novels, the daily comic strip, most of the comic books, and was a consultant on the two Lone Ranger movie serials produced by Republic Pictures. He did the same for the Green Hornet and Sergeant Preston brands. He earned $200 a week throughout the 1930's and $400 a week

once AFRA and the Writer's Guild started clamping down on salary inequities on radio in the 1940s. Harmon, 167. He may have earned additional income from his non-radio work, which might also account for his prolificness.
6. Alexander Russo, "A Dark(ened) Figure on the Airwaves: Race, Nation, and The Green Hornet,"in Radio Reader: Essays in the Cultural History of Radio, ed. Michele Hilmes and Jason Loviglio (New York: Routledge, 2002), 257-276.
7. Ibid, 260.
8. Fran Striker, Creative Writing Workbook and the Morphological Approach to Writing, Parts I & II. Lecture notes for a YWCA class on creative writing, 1962.
9. The History of the Lone Ranger. Unpublished manuscript. Author and date unknown. Circa 1953, 7
10. See Michele Hilmes, Hollywood and Broadcasting: From Radio to Cable (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 51. Trendle's decision to break away from CBS offers an interesting counter-narrative to the typical story of how the national networks co-opted local affiliates through offers of free programming and revenue streams and begs more research into the myriad ways local stations responded to the rise of the national network system.
11. J. Bryan III., "Hi Yo Silver," Saturday Evening Post, 14 October 14, 1939, 20.
12. Hilmes, 63-64.
13. The History of the Lone Ranger. Unpublished manuscript. Author and date unknown. Circa 1953.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. TLS, James E. Jewell to Fran Striker. December 28, 1932.
17. Hilmes, 58-60.
18. Gary Cross, Kid's Stuff: Toys and the Changing World of American Childhood (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 110.
19. Ibid, 107.
20. Ibid, 114. The History of the Lone Ranger. Unpublished manuscript. Author and date unknown. Circa 1953. Though Trendle's exact reasons for privileging the western remain unknown, he would later express a displeasure for the "unrealistic" nature of science fiction, which reduced

audience identification with the hero and, hence, with their interest in using the hero's "props" in their daily lives.
21. "Radio's Most Spectacular Incident," Promotional pamphlet, June 1933.
22. Ibid.
23. Bruce Smith, The History of Little Orphan Annie (New York: Ballantine Books, 1982).
24. Lone Ranger chronology circa 1953.
25. "Our Best Salesman Rides a Horse." Ad for Gordon Baking Company appearing in Grocers Spotlight Newspaper, ND.
26. Russo, 259.
27. See also Hilmes, 144.
28. Hilmes, 144.
29. "Detroit's WXYZ Wins Showmanship Award," Life, 27 December 1937 (reprint). See also Hilmes, 145.
30. The Lone Ranger Merchandising Exploitation Publicity Supplement, circa 1937.
31. Memo, William S. Rainey to John F. Royal, March 16, 1937.
32. NBC-King-Trendle Transcription/Distribution Contract, January 29, 1938.
33. The Lone Ranger Merchandising Exploitation Publicity Supplement, circa 1937. See also Baker's Helper, August 20, 1938
34. Lone Ranger chronology circa 1953.
35. Lone Ranger chronology circa 1953.
36. The Lone Ranger Merchandising Exploitation Publicity Supplement, circa 1937.
37. The History of the Lone Ranger. Unpublished manuscript. Author and date unknown. Circa 1953.
38. The Lone Ranger Merchandising Exploitation Publicity Supplement, circa 1937.
39. TLS, Emil Reinhardt to Chas C. Hicks, April 20, 1938; TLS Clarence Cosby to Hicks, April 21, 1938; TLS John J. Corrigan to Hicks, April 23, 1938; TLS, E.B. Crany to Hicks, April 25, 1938; TLS, Craig Lawrence to Hicks, April 26, 1938.
40. The Lone Ranger Sales Manual, circa 1937.
41. TLS, Sehl Advertising Agency to Chas C. Hicks, June 8, 1936.
42. "Who's Asleep at the Switch," Ad for Gordon Baking Company in Grocers Spotlight Newspaper, ND.

43. Cross, 108.
44. Manual: “The Lone Ranger”: Details of Procedure in Handling the Exploitation of the Program for Maximum Retail Results. Circa 1939.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
48. TLS, Lloyd George Venard, Director of Sales WCKY to Chas C. Hicks, April 28, 1938.
49. The Lone Ranger Sales Manual, circa 1937 AND Manual: “The Lone Ranger”: Details of Procedure in Handling the Exploitation of the Program for Maximum Retail Results. Circa 1939.
50. Ibid.
51. Synopsis Lone Ranger Contract with Republic Productions, June 1937.
52. The History of the Lone Ranger. Unpublished manuscript. Author and date unknown. Circa 1953.
53. Transcription of deposition by George W. Trendle. Buck Jones vs. Republic Productions Inc. March 31, 1939. 55.
54. Hilmes, 70.
55. Ibid, 55-60.
56. Ibid, 58-59.
57. Ibid, 60, 71.
58. The Lone Ranger Merchandising Exploitation Publicity Supplement, circa 1937.
59. Ibid.
60. Manual: “The Lone Ranger”: Details of Procedure in Handling the Exploitation of the Program for Maximum Retail Results. Circa 1939.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.
64. Nicholas Sammond, Babes in Tomorrowland: Walt Disney and the Making of the American Child, 1930-1960 (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 170.
65. “Retailers Push Lone Ranger Merchandise.” Originally part of an exploitation packet, but removed. No date.
66. Ibid.
67. Cross, 104-107
68. Sammond, 170.
69. Cross, 107.

70. “Lone Ranger Enters Field of Merchandise,” Advertising Age, 23 May 1938 (reprint).
71. Items that ranged from toys (moving picture machines, 10, 25, 50, and 100 ft 16mm animated films for home projectors, dolls, doll figures, holster sets without Ranger guns, rings), novelty items made of plastic materials, yo-yo tops, toy stuffed horse depicting Silver, Silver Arabian Pony (variation of a hobby horse), box coloring sets, board games, dice and spinner (for home use only), card games, novelty coin banks, toy balloons, inflatable rubber toys) to clothing and accessories (cowboy hats, suits, neckerchiefs, watches, sweat shirts, polo shirts, knitted cotton underwear and shorts, shoes, boots, slippers, belts, wallets, cowboy gloves, embroidered insignias, novelty skull caps, sailor hats, winter aviation hats, hockey and baseball caps, overalls, coveralls, rangeralls, dungarees, slacks, sun suits, children’s hosiery) to school supplies (school bags, brief cases, fountain pens, mechanical pencils), food products (bubble gum, ice cream cones), and everything in between (first aid kits, bandages, tumblers, flashlights, silver plated spoons, cups, knives, table glassware, combs, toothbrushes, brushes of all types, books to retail at no more than 50 cents, stationary, novelty bars of soap). “Manufacturers Licensed to Produce Lone Ranger Articles,” February 13, 1939.
72. This was the standard royalty rate for licensing. See Cross, 105.
73. The Lone Ranger Merchandising Exploitation Publicity Supplement, circa 1937.
74. Cross, 83.
75. Cross, 101.
76. M. Cross, 68.
77. Kate Lacey, “Radio in the Great Depression: Promotional Culture, Public Service, and Propaganda,”in Radio Reader: Essays in the Cultural History of Radio, ed. Michele Hilmes and Jason Loviglio (New York: Routledge, 2002), 24.
78. William Bird, Better Living: Advertising, Media and the New Vocabulary of Business Leaders, 1935-1955 (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1999), 17-18.
79. Roland Marchand, Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 109.

80. Lacey, 23. Daniel Czitrom, Media and the American Mind: From Morse to McLuhan (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983), 88.
81. Lacey, 31.
82. Cross, 103.
83. Ibid, 102.
84. Ibid, 102.
85. Ibid, 100-101.
86. Ibid, 83-84.
87. Ibid, 107.
88. Ibid, 109-110.
89. Sammond, 162.
90. Marchand, 230.
91. "Veiled Vindictive Annie," Time, 9 September 1935; "Hooverism in the Funnies," The New Republic, 11 July 1934.
92. "Veiled Vindictive Annie," Time, 9 September 1935.
93. Ibid.
94. "Hooverism in the Funnies," The New Republic, 11 July1934.
95. "Veiled Vindictive Annie". Time. September 9, 1935.
96. Blackett-Sample-Hummert outline of principles guiding production of *Little Orphan Annie* and *Jack Armstrong* radio programs, sent to Niles Trammell at NBC, July 12, 1938.
97. Memo, Enid Beaupre to EPH James, February 9, 1933.
98. Memo, Royal to Trammell, February 10, 1933.
99. Blackett-Sample-Hummert outline of principles guiding production of *Little Orphan Annie* and *Jack Armstrong* radio programs, sent to Niles Trammell at NBC, July 12, 1938.
100. Ibid.
101. Sammond, 171.
102. Cross, 107.
103. J. Bryan III, "Hi-Yo Silver," Saturday Evening Post, 14 October 1939.
104. TLS, Jewell to Striker, January 21, 1933.
105. Sammond, 165.
106. TLS, Striker to Jewell, January 6, 1933.
107. The Lone Ranger Sales Manual, circa 1937
108. TLS, Sehl Advertising Agency, Inc., to Trendle, October 17, 1935.

109. Manual: “The Lone Ranger”: Details of Procedure in Handling the Exploitation of the Program for Maximum Retail Results. Circa 1939.
110. “Hi Yo Silver Lining,” The New Republic, 11 January 1941.
111. The Lone Ranger Sales Manual, circa 1937.
112. Ibid.
113. TLS, D.R. Lane (Emil Reinhardt Advertising) to Charles C. Hicks, October 29, 1937.
114. I wish to thank Michael Kackman for suggesting the “bland” descriptor as capturing the seemingly disengaged nature of how brand’s approached politics.
115. Weber’s Lone Ranger Safety Club Official Manual, 1939.15.
116. Bird, 14.
117. “The American Way,” Time, 28 September 1936.
118. Weber’s Lone Ranger Safety Club Official Manual, 1939. 8.
119. Ibid. 9,13.
120. Ibid, 4.
121. Ibid, 5.
122. Manual: “The Lone Ranger”: Details of Procedure in Handling the Exploitation of the Program for Maximum Retail Results. Circa 1939.
123. Sammond, 167
124. I am using Eileen Meehan’s term used to describe contemporary media conglomerate practices of generating intersecting chains of products built around a particular brand, each promoting the other and extending the experience for consumers without necessarily tying them to any one particular text. As I argue throughout, such practices are not new. Moreover, here I am positing that there was a correlation between such branded intertexts and their educational value. Eileen Meehan, "Holy Commodity Fetish, Batman! The Political Economy of a Commercial Intertext" in The Many Lives of the Batman: Critical Approaches to a Superhero and his Media, ed. Roberta E. Pearson and William Uricchio (New York: Routledge University Press, 1991), 47-65.
125. Weber’s Lone Ranger Safety Club Official Manual, 1939, 9.
126. Ibid. 27.
127. The Lone Ranger Sales Manual, circa 1937.
128. Ibid.

Chapter Three: Introduction

By 1938, *The Lone Ranger* was being heard coast-to-coast on 107 radio stations and the series had amassed forty-two sponsors. The King Features Syndicate published a daily Lone Ranger comic strip in 80 newspapers across the country (and 60 newspapers on Sundays). Republic Studios had released two fifteen-part movie serials, spurring new radio sponsorship opportunities and transcription sales. Several Lone Ranger novels were in print and a comic book would debut in 1940. Nearly seventy separate merchandising licenses had also already been issued for products ranging from toy pistols to bed linens. Across America, Lone Ranger Safety Clubs boasted membership in the millions, teaching children consumer-friendly forms of citizenship. They also linked together the myriad Lone Ranger products in circulation and elevated the Lone Ranger brand above any one of these items, as an iconic personality that club members could befriend or even embody through habitual brand consumption. The radio series remained tied, however, to the Mutual Radio Network and its various independent local and regional partnerships and sponsorships. In short, the Lone Ranger was a national sales and cultural phenomenon, though still not a nationally sponsored or networked

one.

NBC and CBS had been working to establish themselves as national networks since the early 1930s. *The Lone Ranger*'s origins, in contrast, resulted from an initial need to create profitable *local* and *regional* programming for station WXYZ and the Michigan Radio Network, which had purposely broken free from CBS' centralized programming initiatives in the early 1930s. By the end of the decade, however, King-Trendle began to see the upside of partnering with a national network.[1] King-Trendle's growing interest in national sponsorship coincided with NBC's desires to acquire proven ratings and revenue-generating programs to compete against CBS. Both NBC and CBS regularly raided Mutual's most successful programs, promising national exposure and sponsorship for those that jumped ship. In reality, many of Mutual's programs were already proven coast-to-coast successes, but the network lacked the centralized structure and resources to attract large national sponsors. As such, an established iconic brand like the Lone Ranger could help legitimate NBC's claims to national status as much as NBC could help King-Trendle land a more lucrative sponsorship deal for his radio product.

It is perhaps surprising then that King-Trendle's first foray into the

nationally networked spotlight was not with the Lone Ranger, but with the company's other brand, the Green Hornet. Britt Reid, The Green Hornet, was the fictional distant relative of the Lone Ranger, taking up the latter's legacy of fighting crime, this time in a contemporary urban setting. Created in 1936, *The Green Hornet* radio series, also owned and produced by King-Trendle, purposely evoked its distant cousin's "memory" (in reality, both series ran simultaneously) in order to capitalize on *The LoneRanger's* success. *The Green Hornet* updated, but also basically repeated *The Lone Ranger's* narrative formula. Both series featured masked men fighting crime. Both heroes were known for their weapons of choice (the Lone Ranger had his silver-handled six shooters that fired silver bullets; the Green Hornet had his gas gun that fired pellets of "instant sleep"), their modes of transport (the Lone Ranger's mighty steed, Silver; the Green Hornet's souped up car, the Black Beauty), and their non-white companions (the "half-breed" Tonto and the ever-shifting "Oriental" Kato).

Reminders of the connection between the two series were not reserved for radio audiences alone. Promotional materials created by King-Trendle also repeatedly stressed the sales potential of *The Green Hornet* by pointing to the licensor's proven success with *The Lone*

Ranger. Moreover, both series were also initially marketed in similar ways, sold market-by-market to regional sponsors, relying on audience measurement techniques and premium giveaways that revealed the selling power of personality, especially to children, and stressing the cross-merchandising potential of the properties. Similar to how it sold its own role with the Lone Ranger brand, King-Trendle once again positioned the company as both merchandising manager and moral arbiter, devising reusable marketing materials and justifying the business of selling to children on the grounds of the character-building power of the Green Hornet's personality.

Yet, where *The Lone Ranger* was an unmitigated sales success, having achieved coast-to-coast popularity by 1938 and a reputation as a good moral spokesperson for its commercially minded sponsors, *The Green Hornet* struggled to find sponsors. Some of these difficulties resulted from the areas of difference between *The Lone Ranger* and *The Green Hornet* that King-Trendle's marketing strategies unintentionally called attention to by consistently comparing the two series. Partnering with NBC offered the opportunity to forego the market-by-market approach in favor of landing a single national sponsor. *The Green Hornet* made the initial leap to a national network before *The Lone Ranger*

because *The Lone Ranger's* multiple radio sponsorships, with varying end-dates (depending on when and for how long a given contract had been signed), meant that it was a much more difficult series to move off the Mutual network without defaulting on existing deals. Moreover, as King-Trendle had learned through its dealing with Republic Studios, film serials based on its brands did far better at the box-office in pre-sold markets where the radio series was already heard, adding incentive to maximize the number of stations airing its product as quickly as possible. Debuting three years after *The Lone Ranger*, *The Green Hornet* had more ground to cover in less time if King-Trendle wanted to achieve the same cross-promotional success with this brand. Once again, NBC seemingly offered a quick solution. Though *The Green Hornet* was not the commercial success *The Lone Ranger* was, its ratings were impressive and its owners had an established reputation, making it an intriguing property for NBC as well.

NBC's investment in balancing profit with public service, as well as the greater scrutiny it faced from the FCC and pressure groups than networks like Mutual because of its claims to national status, brought unanticipated complications in promoting the Green Hornet as a national brand. King-Trendle's partnership with NBC would prove short-lived but

disastrous for the brand's future development. Whereas *The Lone Rang*er had firmly established its commercial and moral respectability by 1938, *The Green Hornet* did not have the same reputation to fall back on. As a result, the series oscillated between targeting regional and national sponsorship, shifting networks multiple times accordingly.

This uncertainty also reared its head in the ways the series' target audience was constructed. While clearly directed at children prior to 1938, promotional materials between 1938-1941 constructed the series as appealing primarily to adults, but still pulling in a large juvenile audience that would bolster sales. Though this shift in target audience was intended to avert accusations that the series was unsuitable for children, the attempt at selling the dual appeal of the series to both adults and youth only managed to further confuse potential sponsors and networks, particularly as radio schedules became more and more routinized according to gender and age-specific hours of the day. This confusion was exacerbated by the selling strategies used in approaching ad agencies and sponsors, which often reinforced the child-like qualities of *The Green Hornet* program, even as brochures argued for its adult orientation.

Promotional materials, as well as internal memos discussing potential premiums for the Green Hornet property, between 1938-1941

also reveal considerable confusion over how to visually represent the characters of the Green Hornet and Kato. In part, this confusion relates to the shifting construction of the series' audience from children to adults, which seemed to necessitate (and evoked considerable anxiety over) a greater degree of realism in how the Green Hornet, a masked modern day crime fighter, might actually look. In part, such debates also stemmed from the expanding number of visual media sites seeking to license the property and the corresponding need to translate previously exclusive oral markers of distinction into a coherent, managed, yet still unique image (a feat far easier to accomplish - though not without compromises - with the Lone Ranger, where the cowboy icon simply needed a mask). Finally, debates over how to represent Kato were informed both by shifting cultural assumptions about different Asian nationalities as well as by institutionalized racist markers of distinction, which sought to differentiate Kato from other racialized groups, yet still mark him as non-white.

While licensed properties sold the power of their "unique" personality, by 1938 the field was beginning to get crowded and efforts to distinguish between programs and properties became more overt. Aside from financial concerns over being labeled a derivative or a copy, there was mounting legal ramifications, as efforts to capitalize on the goodwill

of a property through either direct or indirect “borrowing” challenged licensors to prove their ownership and sole right to exploit their properties. Licensors also found themselves deflecting accusations that they had stolen the essence of another property in creating their own brand.

King-Trendle faced these concerns on multiple fronts during this period and with both of its properties. In King-Trendle’s efforts to ground *The Green Hor*net within a decidedly adult genre, the brand drew uncomfortable comparisons to other radio crime dramas which, in turn, opened up debates over whose program had inspired the others. Meanwhile, The Lone Ranger Inc engaged in a series of legal battles resulting from the cross-merchandising and multi-mediated success King-Trendle had with *that* property. In other words, concerns over ownership were factors regardless of the success or failure of a property, though they manifested themselves differently depending on their established popularity and profitability.

The Lone Ranger first faced legal problems in 1939 when the success of the Republic Pictures film serial brought a lawsuit from cowboy actor Buck Jones accusing Republic Studios and King-Trendle of stealing and profiting from his established film personality. Almost immediately afterwards, King-Trendle faced more legal troubles when

Republic Studios attempted to produce a film serial titled *The Lone Star Ranger*, which the licensor claimed was clearly an attempt to capitalize on the Lone Ranger's popularity without sharing in the profits. Finally, in what would turn out to be a groundbreaking case, The Lone Ranger Inc sued The Wallace Brothers Circus and Lee Powell, an actor who had played the Lone Ranger in the Republic film serial, for an act in which he claimed to be the "real" Lone Ranger. The manner of argumentation and the rulings in these cases are significant for the way they attempted to demonstrate tangible ownership over intangible properties and conflated public icons with intellectual property. They are also significant because they posed a final hurdle that needed to be overcome before *The Lone Ranger* could procure a national sponsor.

In many ways, this chapter is a continuation of the previous one, but also an important and complicating intervention. Focusing on the period 1938-1941, just prior to the US entry into WWII and General Mills assuming national sponsorship of both *The Lone Ranger* (1942) and *The Green Hornet* (1946), this chapter focuses on the struggles that needed to be overcome to pave the way for this shift, as well as the new troubles that emerged as a result of the transition to national network and sponsorship strategies. The first chapter argued for the ways King-Trendle's successful

managing of both multiple markets and merchandising outlets, coupled with the alleviation of concerns over marketing powerful personalities directly to children led to the Lone Ranger's growth as a reputable sales agent and opened up possibilities for national exploitation by one sponsor; this chapter suggests, by looking primarily at the Green Hornet, that there were incentives for licensors to abandon the market-by-market approach, but also that complications that arose when doing so. This chapter points out some of the historically specific difficulties that arose from efforts to sell properties across multiple audiences (children and adults) and from attempts to bank on the reputation of one property to sell another (the Lone Ranger selling the Green Hornet), strategies that would later become common amongst conglomerates cross-marketing their wares. Finally, I argue that licensors success spurred a new set of troubles. In the case of the Lone Ranger, this resulted in King-Trendle's need to both defend and litigate against attempts to capitalize on the goodwill established by the property as an effective and morally upright sales agent.

The development of a successful national brand requires aligning the property with multiple and often competing economic and cultural interests. As such, there is much that can be learned from studying unsuccessful branding attempts because they illuminate the complexities

of trans-media management. *The Green Hornet*, though not an unpopular radio program, represents precisely such a failed branding effort. King-Trendle's attempts to extend the Green Hornet brand coincided with the licensor's initial efforts to abandon its market-to-market recyclable sales strategies in favor of landing a single national sponsor. Without the pre-established groundwork that had been invested in developing the Lone Ranger brand, the Green Hornet was simply unable to make the adjustment. Therefore, the Green Hornet's counter-example also provides important insight into the relationship between recyclable local sales initiatives and the achievement of national status, revealing how important first cultivating local fan communities was for the Lone Ranger before the brand became nationally sponsored.

Finally, the more successful a brand becomes, the less clearly identified it is with a particular owner. While the elevation of a brand above the specific products it adorns is key to how contemporary commercial intertexts work, it is important to situate historically and analyze the legal struggles and work practices that have allowed licensors to keep control over their intangible and iconic properties. King-Trendle's efforts to prove its ownership over the Lone Ranger brand in the late 1930s was central to establishing the parameters of what constitutes

intellectual property and differentiates it from free-floating cultural images and ideas that anyone can exploit.

SHARED HERITAGE

The Green Hornet made its radio debut on station WXYZ on January 31, 1936, three years and one day after *The Lone Ranger* was first broadcast. Shortly thereafter, King-Trendle went in search of a local sponsor by demonstrating the popularity of the program through a write-in giveaway campaign. Announcements for *The Green Hornet* program offered "lucky token" premiums to the first 2000 listeners who wrote in (this number was significantly larger than the 300 toy guns offered by *The Lone Ranger*). Six-thousand three-hundred thirty-seven letters were received (this was significantly less than the 24, 607 requests *The Lone Ranger* drew). The effort succeeded in landing the Detroit Creamery Company, makers of Golden Jersey Milk, as the series' initial sponsor, beginning November 10, 1936. The Detroit Creamery was represented by the N.W. Ayer & Co Advertising Agency.

Though the numbers were considerably smaller than those of *The Lone Ranger*, the strategy of using audience size measurement to gauge *The Green Hornet's* popularity remained the same. Susan Smulyan argues

that radio stations not only encouraged listeners to write in by offering giveaways, but also used these same letters as a means of proving a particular program's popularity, but also combined this method in the 1930s with newer, more 'scientific' measurement strategies, such as phone surveys. Because letters and surveys were utilized to attract advertisers**,** the people who commissioned them always selectively spun the results to make any program seem like a potential commercial windfall.[2]

In addition to premiums, by 1938 King-Trendle was contracting independent surveyors such as the Ross Federal Research Corp and Crossley to conduct telephone interviews that asked respondents what radio program they were listening to at the time of the call. While telephone surveys could produce impressive statistical evidence of the listening audience (a 1938 survey of 100 homes in the Detroit area revealed that 60 percent listened to *The Green Hornet*[3]), they were not as revealing of whether a particular program could get listeners to interact with a given personality (and, by extension, the product that personality sponsored) as write-in letters for premiums. Giveaways were used as the primary evidence that listeners "definitely... bought the product because of 'THE GREEN HORNET.'"[4]

Nonetheless, telephone surveys served two important functions:

they could break audiences down by geographic location, gender and age, and they could assure certain legitimacy to the measurement process because independent contractors conducted them. Thus, Chas C. Hicks, manager of King-Trendle's sales promotion department could confidently report to his equivalent at the Mutual Broadcast System that within the 60 homes the Ross survey found listening to *The Green Hornet*, the actual audience consisted of 54 men, 56 women and 82 children "scattered city-wide to cover all classes of listeners," which in turn proved King-Trendle's claim that the program was "a giant for results in metropolitan centers as well as in small towns and rural communities."[5] The concern with identifying an audience that was both urban and rural for the program suggests that even as radio was becoming increasingly national, sponsors still measured their consumer-base in regional configurations, making it crucial that a licensed radio property be popular across various landscapes. This might have been especially true of a property such as *The Green Hornet*, which was narratively linked to the big city through his crime-fighting exploits. The seemingly large adult listenership that the survey also revealed would later be put to use in re-constructing *The Green Hornet's* supposed audience appeal.

Beyond cold figures and rudimentary demographics, by the early

1940s popularity was also being measured qualitatively by "human interest stories reflecting the adoptation of a radio character by the public."[6] As such, a 1942 sales brochure complemented its statistics with accounts of how Lt. General George S. Patton's nickname was "The Green Hornet," a title also given to an "untouchable" Detroit police officer by the criminal elements that feared him. Similarly, a professional wrestler was listed as having taken the shown name "The Green Hornet" in order to gain attention. Whereas Patton and the police's adoption of the GH moniker was pointed out proudly as evidence of the character's popularity, the brochure assured readers that the wrestler "was shorn of his adopted title immediately by King-Trendle for obvious reasons."[7] While identification with the character could be used as proof of its public appeal, it was important that the right people identified with the Green Hornet, in this case moral authorities rather than entertainers seeking to "profit handsomely" by association.[8] Human-interest measurement had the potential to further specify the type of audience a program attracted, but such specification had to be carefully monitored.

While by 1940, *The Green Hornet* was being sold as an adult program, this audience was not the central one identified in the late 1930s for the show. Though there is considerable confusion over and allusion to

an adult listernership (as with the Ross survey above), the initial Jersey Milk campaign and its subsequent exploitation sought to foreground how the Green Hornet's personality increased sales to children and converted them into sales agents. The Jersey Milk campaign, transcribed in its entirety as a case history for future sponsors, provides all of the commercial interludes used by the sponsor, which are largely directed either at children or at their parents. The very first Jersey Milk advertisement on November 10, 1936 bluntly stated, "We're going to have some interesting things to say to children on these programs. They'll idolize THE GREEN HORNET - and they'll love Golden Jersey Milk."[9] Other spots evoked memories of childhood for adult listeners. Listed as typical commercial copy for a March 2, 1937 episode, the announcement read, "Remember the old spring house on the farm where the rich milk was stored in stone crocks for the cream to rise... Those childhood thrills live again when you drink Golden Jersey Milk..."[10] Proof of the property's commercial value was offered in the form of anecdotal evidence that children "chased the [milk delivery] drivers in order to obtain a jar of cottage cheese as announced on the program."[11] At other moments, publicity transformed the child audience from consumers into actual workers. A February 3, 1939 letter from Hicks to Trendle offered some

quick references on selling the Green Hornet, discussed a photograph giveaway that attracted 181,640 requests, and emphasized that this number was all the more impressive because of the work assignment listeners were given in order to obtain this premium. “BUT respondents had the difficult assignment of an early rising to meet the milkman at the door, in order to secure photos.”[12]

Designed as a sales aid, *The Green Hornet* program was promoted as one that “stimulates action in its listeners... in writing, in requesting premiums and in buying!”[13] Selling the program to other sellers, King-Trendle promoted the program’s popularity not just with children listeners, but also amongst retailers who, Hicks “reminds” the Badger, Browning & Hersey Advertising Agency, “are not to be forgotten in today’s advertising and exploitation campaigns.”[14] Likewise, the Golden Jersey Milk ads made repeated reference to the “courteous salesman” who delivers both milk and Green Hornet premiums, at times even imbuing him with a heroic work ethic on par with the Green Hornet.[15] Other spots directly conflated the sponsor with its spokesperson or attribute the power of the product to confer the Green Hornet’s character attributes on its consumers. A November 10, 1936 ad boasted, “The story of Golden Jersey Milk is a dramatic one – as dramatic, in its own way, as the story of THE GREEN

HORNET."[16] Another ad promised, "These crisp Fall days should make you feel full of vigor – full of the 'up-and-at-'em' spirit that characterizes THE GREEN HORNET in his relentless search for criminals that even the law cannot reach! Drink plenty of Golden Jersey Milk."[17]

At the same time, marketing strategies were devised to alleviate the anxiety felt by parents and sponsors alike in selling directly to children by emphasizing the product's beneficial qualities and the Green Hornet's ability to sell children (and their parents) on such helpful and healthful consumer goods. The Golden Jersey Milk campaign repeatedly stressed the healthful qualities of its product in promoting extra vigor and energy. "It is mighty good to drink – mighty good <u>for</u> you – and especially for children."[18] Other suggested marketing strategies included approaching law enforcement officials to endorse the program's crusading themes.[19] King-Trendle also positioned itself as moral arbiter and guardian of children. An internal memo discussing a licensing contract between The Green Hornet Inc and Feinberg-Henry Co to produce a Green Hornet gun articulated the licensor's moral obligation to include language in the contract that would guard against the toy manufacturer "capitalizing on the type of gun used in the radio script... by producing something which might be harmful to children using same."[20] As with the Lone Ranger, protecting

children once again became a moral commodity to be bandied about as negotiating chips in sales drives. Responding to Sydney Gaynor, assistant commercial manager at the Don Lee Broadcasting System, regarding the cost of a Green Hornet seal ring premium, Hicks wondered if the lower manufacturing price Gaynor was able to find was due to poor quality, which would in turn take away from both the moral and economic value of the giveaway. "THE GREEN HORNET seal ring we show will be one that children will strive to earn and one that will cause other children to become so envious of the present wearer that they in turn will work hard to get one... a high grade premium will live longer in popularity and accomplish the purpose in greater volume than that which is made to meet a certain price."[21]

As these examples suggest, King-Trendle also relied upon strategies of duplication and recycling in its marketing of *The Green Hornet*. A 1939 promotional packet assembled to sell the upcoming availability of the radio series via transcription through NBC makes this abundantly clear when it stated, "Original sponsors success in Detroit and Michigan is a 'Yard-Stick' for all prospective sponsors."[22] Much like *The Lone Ranger*, *The Green Hornet* was initially sold market-by-market, with King-Trendle approaching independent radio stations with the promise of

helping them attract local sponsorship in exchange for their purchasing two 30-minute episodes per week, the radio program on a limited sustaining basis. As with *The Lone Ranger*, Trendle usually charged 30-50 percent of the highest priced half-hour drama on a station's schedule, depending on the size of the market, ranging from a low of fifteen dollars to a high of several hundred dollars per episode.[23] This localized marketing focus required King-Trendle to maintain a certain amount of flexibility, which would dissipate as their properties became more nationally established. For instance, a letter responding to station WHEAF in Binghamton, New York's request for information on *The Green Hornet series* offered, "if you will be kind enough to send us just how you operate your sales and what your own plans are, it will be our pleasure to work out, according to the expertise of others, a plan for your consideration in this present circumstance."[24] By November 1939, the series was heard over 64 stations along the Mutual and Don Lee radio networks and was available via transcription from NBC.

King-Trendle also ensured that all materials it provided, from advertising copy to premiums, were copyrighted at the licensee's expense, in the name of the Green Hornet, Inc.[25] Moreover, while King-Trendle supplied promotional materials intended to help radio stations find

sponsorship for the series, this assistance came with the caveat that stations "shall not, under any circumstances, be permitted to engage in, publish, promote, manufacture, disperse or dispose of any GREEN HORNET material of any type, nature or description whatsoever, unless and until our approval has been first given to you in writing and then only upon such terms and conditions which we may have a right to impose."[26] These restrictions extended to the types of sponsorship stations could seek for the property.

Just as with The Lone Ranger, Inc., the Green Hornet was incorporated soon after it landed its initial commercial sponsorship. The incorporation stipulates a wide range of activities and areas of exploitation that The Green Hornet, Inc., laid claim to, beginning with ownership of the name "The Green Hornet" and the right to "do anything and everything to promote, publicize, ameliorate and sponsor the name." The document then listed the various areas of exploitation claimed by the company, including radio programs, theatrical productions, toys, games, novelties, amusement parks, amusement games, amusement devices, amusement rides, public dance halls, cafes, exhibitions, athletic competitions, food products, wearing apparel, publishing, and motion pictures.[27] While this evidences the expansive licensing arenas conceived

by King-Trendle, it also reveals the legal need to cover all bases against infringement.

Moreover, King-Trendle saw the opportunity to profit from cross-promoting various Green Hornet licenses, rather than simply extending its reach in multiple directions. While premium manufacturers such as the Sackman Brothers were contractually obliged to meet a minimum guarantee of $3000 paid to The Green Hornet Inc., regardless of the actual number of play suits and uniforms it sold, the licensor also claimed a royalty ranging from 2-5 percent of each sale, depending on to whom articles were sold--wholesalers or retailers. In turn, King-Trendle promoted its manufacturing licensors to its radio sponsors for the purpose of premiums and giveaways.[28] Similarly, 1940 and 1941 Green Hornet movie serials (titled *The Green Hornet* and *The Green Hornet Strikes Again* respectively) produced by Universal Pictures were used as both promotional strategies to attract new radio sponsors and as cross-promotional endeavors to build premium tie-ins. In an effort to entice the Badger, Browning & Hersey ad agency to sell the Green Hornet to a potential radio sponsor, King-Trendle stated, “The Green Hornet is a great show - and greater today than when it originated... The best recommendation for such a claim is the fact that... the movies do not make

pictures out of radio shows that do not meet a certain audience level."[29]

A letter to the sales contact at Universal Pictures, which provided an updated list of radio stations carrying the Green Hornet for cross-promotional purposes, further argued that "as news of the forthcoming movie gets around there certainly will be additions, at least by stations desiring to carry the program sustaining from which, as you know, commercial sponsors derive".[30] The implications of this letter are that Universal should go all out in promoting the film serial, not just placing it in cities where the radio program was already heard, but also helping to generate new sponsors and audiences through the popularity of the serial. The radio series was positioned as the central node in the cross-marketing matrix, but the film serial was looked to as key to expanding the property's market reach. "This movie tie-in will not only be immensely valuable in extending the audience of the 'Green Hornet', it will also offer splendid tie-in and promotion opportunities for the sponsor of this program."[31]

Of course, King-Trendle also drew upon the success of the Lone Ranger in their efforts to sell the Green Hornet. The sales potential of tying in with *The Green Hornet* movie serial was guaranteed because "as experienced by the success of 'The Lone Ranger' movie serials in

strengthening the popularity of the radio feature, the far reaching effects of 'The Green Hornet' movie serial needs no further mention."[32] The fact that the Lone Ranger had accumulated 74 licenses by 1941 was used to convince potential sponsors that the Green Hornet "could also develop a number of them."[33] In a letter to radio station KBJ offering suggestions on how it might lure a sponsor for *The Green Hornet*, Hicks encloses a copy of a letter from *The Lone Ranger's* sponsor, Gordon's Bakery, on how it cut down on bread returns through a story book giveaway of "How The Lone Ranger Captured Silver."[34] In devising the marketing campaign for the Green Hornet transcription sale, Hicks explicitly informed Frank Chizzini at NBC Transcription Services that "the plan requires... definite identification of THE LONE RANGER program success as accentuating the value of THE GREEN HORNET."[35] In a lengthy explication, worth quoting in full, Hicks stated:

> Certainly such mention will be carried in the copy, but in our opinion THE LONE RANGER success should be strongly identified in the heading of the broadside as it opens up flat. For instance, timely ordering and consideration of THE GREEN HORNET will remove the disappointment that occurred in many cases to those who wanted THE LONE RANGER and could not get it because of their delay. This point inspires the thought that THE LONE RANGER made its own network and now by the same producers, THE GREEN HORNET will do the same.[36]

While such comparisons seem reasonable given the need for licensors to demonstrate their proven success in an overcrowded market, King-Trendle's reliance on the strategy often seemed to work to the detriment of its Green Hornet property, which always seemed to pale in comparison to the Lone Ranger's popularity. Various audience measurement polls included in promotional brochures for *The Green Hornet* include survey statistics for both radio programs. In one instance, a survey of Baltimore school children revealed that 85 percent of boys and 84 percent of girls listened regularly to *The Lone Ranger* as compared with 73 percent of boys and 66 percent of girls for *The Green Hornet*.[37] Though the percentages were high for both shows, *The Green Hornet* was always depicted as *The Lone Ranger's* poorer cousin through such comparisons.

DIFFICULTIES IN MARKETING/MERCHANDISING

As the examples above suggest, *The Green Hornet's* initial licensing and merchandising campaign bore many similarities to that of *The Lone Ranger's*, even incorporating the success of the latter into its publicity. Still, where *The Lone Ranger* had established a significant

sponsorship base and salesmanship record by 1938, *The Green Hornet* struggled to do the same. Several of the problems King-Trendle encountered with this property resulted from broader concerns over the feasibility of managing sponsorships and licensing arrangements at the local and regional level, issues that affected the whole of broadcasting during this era. While Susan Smulyan has argued that by the early 1930s radio had become a nationally sponsored medium, this is true only of NBC and CBS and, even with these networks, national sponsorship was often more of a rhetorical flourish than a *fait accomplis*.[38] Throughout the 1930s, these so-called national networks competed with locally owned and operated independent radio stations, as well as regional (The Michigan Radio Network) and quasi-national (Mutual) networks. The independents selected programs that suited the specific (and imagined) demands of local businesses and radio listeners and wanted programming tailored to the idiosyncrasies of their specific communities.

Even NBC and CBS's own affiliates and sponsors regularly spurned certain programs or markets that did not suit their imagined client base, whether radio audiences or consumers. In order to attract truly national sponsors (sponsors who would agree to pay to be heard over the entire network) and enlist all of their affiliates, NBC and CBS needed pre-

sold properties that already had established their reputation with consumers and sponsors in multiple markets. Properties like the Lone Ranger and the Green Hornet, which were sold market-by-market, offered that established quality that the national networks needed in order to become truly national. CBS and NBC regularly attempted to steal programs from Mutual and other more regional networks for this purpose. By the end of the decade, the national model also was fast becoming attractive to licensors like King-Trendle because it seemingly offered a more manageable model for exploiting and controlling its properties.

Moreover, licensors felt an added pressure to extend the radio market in order to sell their properties to other media. While the release of the Lone Ranger Republic serial had significantly increased the number of radio stations carrying the program, the film studios were also reluctant to release serials in markets where there had been no previous penetration. A similar problem existed with the comic strip, which publishing syndicates sought to place (and had the most success placing) in markets where the radio show was already being heard. Since properties such as *The Green Hornet* and *The Lone Ranger* were sold based on their proven success, it was essential that King-Trendle capture as much of the national radio market as possible in order to increase its other licensing arrangements.

By 1938, King-Trendle had begun moving in the direction of national sponsorship for both *The Green Hornet* and *The Lone Ranger*, but as the case of the former reveals, moving from the regional to the national spotlight exposed a series of new problems of *The Green Hornet*. Whereas King-Trendle was able to exercise a fairly tight yet flexible model of recycling and adapting marketing strategies to accommodate sponsor and station needs region-by-region, the search for a national sponsor required the licensor to identify definitively both the audience for its properties and their uniqueness within a highly competitive and costly market. Moreover, anxieties over selling to children were accentuated even further on the national stage, causing King-Trendle to change its marketing strategies for *The Green Hornet* by targeting adults as the principal listening group for the series. This claim did not match either the audience measurements or merchandising strategies that had been previously conducted and implemented for the series.

As King-Trendle pursued its market-by-market expansion throughout the late 1930s, several management problems arose, particularly in relation to *The Green Hornet*.[39] These included concerns over sharing marketing materials across potential sales sights. King-Trendle had successfully incorporated *The Lone Ranger* one month before

the Sehl Advertising Agency began its Lone Ranger promotions on behalf of Gordon's Bakeries, including The Safety Club, thus requiring that all marketing materials by copyrighted in the name of The Lone Ranger, Inc. The company was slow in doing likewise with *The Green Hornet*. As a result, the incorporation went into effect after the N.W. Ayer & Son advertising agency had begun its promotion of the series for the Detroit Creamery. Thus, when King-Trendle was initially asked by station KHJ to share its marketing strategies for the series, it expressed a certain degree of ambivalence over circulating materials for which it did not officially own the copyright. Carefully wording his response, Hicks informed Station KHJ,

> as the agency's problem has been entirely one of original creations for merchandising and exploitation, there is a certain amount of courtesy due them in so far as our sending information entirely devised by them and to be used generally... Our position in the matter is that we cannot use items and plans created by an advertising agency without seeming to be unethical and yet the need of creating such pieces did not arise with us because from the beginning the program swept into such audience popularity immediately followed by sale to the present sponsor that the onus of creating all the ideas fell to the N. W. Ayer Company.[40]

Hicks tried to transform a handicap into an advantage by arguing that the lack of available marketing materials was itself evidence of the property's

popularity, since its unprecedented success did not give King-Trendle enough time to develop its own materials.

Similar problems arose in sharing information about premiums for the series. Sydney B. Gaynor, assistant commercial manager at KHJ, Los Angeles, wrote to Hicks on June 30, 1938, stating, "I am at a loss to understand why it is so difficult for us to obtain necessary information on premiums to be used for the GREEN HORNET program."[41] Evidencing the seriousness of the problem, Thayer Ridgeway, KHJ's commercial manager wrote to H. Allen Campbell, King-Trendle's sales manager on the same day, "We can't afford to do a sloppy job on this show either for you, the client, or ourselves, and, the giveaways, being an important part, must be out of production by the [time] the show goes on in August."[42] Hicks' response to Ridgway, sent twelve days later, suggested that the delays were due to difficulties in designing a uniform giveaway that could be usefully licensed to all potential sponsors regardless of geographic location:

> While there seems to be a delay in the opinion of yourself and Mr. Gaynor and Mr. Weiss [the sponsor's sales representative], we are doing everything we can to produce these items correctly and faultlessly so that later on when THE GREEN HORNET reaches greater proportions we will have no regrets as to things we should have done. Bear in mind that in presenting to you a GREEN HORNET ring

> we must devise an emblem that will meet the requirements on the East coast as well as in your territory, and also one that will satisfy individual sponsor's requirements as to identity, etc.[43]

The letter outlined several other anxieties over the appearance of premiums as not capturing the grandness of the radio program, but being necessary compromises for the sake of safety and good ethics.[44] I will return to this question of representation later on in this chapter.

Concerns over the cost of premiums were another problem. Immediately after King-Trendle supplied KHJ with information about the Green Hornet seal ring, Gaynor balked at the price, forcing Hicks to defend the six-cent per ring price tag. Hicks initially justified the cost on the basis of quality, arguing that the King-Trendle ring was more expensive because the seal was etched--not raised-- into the ring, which would make a better imprint and would be two colors. Rhetorically, Hicks asked, "Again referring to the ring manufacturer, does his price include two colors, whereby the black is shiny, like enamel, adding to the beauty?"[45] Hicks also defended the cost in moral terms, pointing out how the ring's appeal to children would help build good character (as referred to above, children would want one so much that they would "work hard" to obtain it).[46] Nonetheless, the licensor regularly was forced to capitulate

to sponsor demands for cheaper premiums, which not only threatened the overall quality of the giveaway, but also took money out of King-Trendle's pockets, since its royalty share also was reduced.

Beyond haggling over premiums, King-Trendle also had difficulty in keeping track of sponsors for its products. Since the licensor would lease a property to a radio station or regional network on a sustaining basis, and then rely on that station's local sales staff to procure a sponsor, King-Trendle relied upon stations to supply accurate and up-to-date information. It is evident from correspondence that the licensor was often suspicious that its clients were not abiding by the terms of their contracts. On September 14, 1938, Hicks wrote to Ridgeway asking for an updated list of stations carrying *The Green Hornet* on a sustaining basis over the Don Lee Broadcasting System, intimating that several were not airing the program twice weekly, which was a stipulation of sponsorship.[47] In 1940, Hicks wrote to Keith Kiggins at NBC, who was selling transcriptions of *The Green Hornet*, and inquired about letters that had been received for a Green Hornet giveaway over a station that not only had no sponsor for the series, but had not received permission from King-Trendle. "Probably, I am over-suspicious, but there must be some reason for such requests and my interest is along the lines that if by such meager plans as various

stations use, response can be secured, a sponsor taking over the program, with good merchandising and sales tie-ins can expect to do a big job."[48] As always, Hicks worked to transform a potential negative - the difficulty in keeping track of what local stations did with the series - into a positive, by suggesting that these successful infringements could be put to use in attracting a sponsor.

Another series of problems King-Trendle regularly encountered in market-by-market licensing of *The Green Hornet* had to do with the complex affiliate relationships certain stations had with the Mutual Broadcasting System, as well as with the varying signal strength of various inquiring radio stations in nearby markets. Where a Mutual affiliate was available, King-Trendle was required to offer *The Green Hornet* first to that station, regardless of other inquiries.[49] Where no Mutual affiliate was available, sales depended either upon electrical transcriptions (recordings of the live program broadcast from WXYZ) through NBC as of May 1, 1939, or upon an independent station accepting entrance into the Mutual family.[50] Beyond the availability and/or willingness of stations to either become Mutual affiliates or take lower quality recordings, was the additional concern that certain markets were geographically located too close to one another and would therefore

compete for listeners, scaring off potential or existing sponsors.[51]

Despite these market concessions, Mutual did not respond favorably to King-Trendle's transcription arrangement with NBC. In particular, it objected to advertisements that mentioned NBC, but not Mutual, forcing King-Trendle to remove all mention of either network from its ads, which raised NBC's ire. Granted, this tactic also worked to King-Trendle's advantage, since it established the licensor's sole ownership of the property without confusion over network involvement. Still, these types of disputes caused tension between the licensor and the key clients it had to satisfy if it hoped to expand *The Green Hornet's* market reach. [52]

Moreover, once transcriptions became available through NBC, concerns over overlapping markets only intensified. Hicks was forced to turn away requests for transcriptions because of existing relations with stations in certain markets. On September 29, 1939, he responded to Mortimer C. Watters, general manager of Station WCPO in Cincinnati, informing Watters that *The Green Hornet* would not be available to his station because of a previous commitment to Station WKRC, which carried *The Lone Ranger* (but not, as yet, *The Green Hornet*). WKRC recently had become a Mutual affiliate, giving it priority in the Cincinnati

market and, additionally, King-Trendle felt obliged to support the long-time *Lone Ranger* sponsor in its choice of radio stations. As Hicks explained, "this selection nominates that station for priority rights with THE GREEN HORNET." Hicks pointed to the clause in the marketing brochure that stipulated that any license is "subject to prior sale" as a safeguard against such competing bids, but he evidently was anxious about this refusal. WCPO had made strides toward securing a sponsor for the series, yet Hicks was forced to shut down this possibility due to "circumstances beyond our control whereby you will undoubtedly be disappointed in having gone so far toward a sale, and, of necessity, being called off from further effort."[53]

As it had done with *The Lone Ranger*, King-Trendle contracted with NBC to sell transcription recordings to the latter's own affiliate stations in markets where no Mutual station was either available or interested. While the transcription deal with NBC opened up new potential markets, it also generated concern over how to best reach them. NBC's marketing, while further reaching than King-Trendle's, was also out of sync with how the licensor previously had sold its properties to other sellers. Frank E. Chizzini, assistant manager of NBC Transcription Services, wrote to H. Allen Campbell of NBC's plans to promote *The*

Green Hornet series at an upcoming National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) conference by adapting the mark of the Green Hornet, left behind at the end of every episode as proof of his presence, and leaving this insignia all over the convention.[54] NBC also created a series of postcards sent at intervals to advertising agencies and radio stations teasing the upcoming transcription campaign. The postcards featured a hornet in a top hat promising to 'buzz' into offices in the near future to pitch a 'stinger' of an idea that would bring in "plenty of long **GREEN**... if you'd like to **HORN** in on **IT.**"[55] [See image #1]

Hicks responded to this campaign with trepidation, warning that it had been King-Trendle's experience that such a teaser campaign "becomes a bit of an annoyance" if not received by buyers in quick succession, provoking the negative response of "'For God's sake if you've got anything good send it along to us and don't delay something that we might need right now.'"[56] Whereas King-Trendle's marketing of *The Green Hornet* stressed the property's ability to transform children into a sales force, working hard to obtain giveaways from the sponsor, NBC's campaign seemed to transform sales agents into children, providing them with graphic illustrations, teasers, and hidden hornet insignias hiding around the sales convention.

Hicks further suggested that the hornet illustration used in the NBC teaser campaign elicited too much of an "insect" response, and urged Chizinni to merge "the showing of THE GREEN HORNET device with THE GREEN HORNET personality in some way so that to a person who would merely look at the display without reading it would not get the idea that we were selling insecticides."[57] The continued concern over how to represent an otherwise intangible and non-corporeal personality would reach greater proportions as the radio character readied to enter other media (comic books, comic strips, films) and merchandise (more below).

While all of these factors pushed King-Trendle to look for a single national sponsor that would eliminate all of its competing station, affiliate, marketing, and merchandising concerns, important pull factors made national sponsorship an attractive proposition. As King-Trendle had discovered with the Republic produced Lone Ranger film serials, expansion into other markets largely depended on radio penetration. King-Trendle was eager to maximize the exposure for the Green Hornet's pending film debut, by having a ready-made pre-sold national market already in place. As Trendle explained, "I am withholding any closing of the deal until we get the program over a larger territory, a larger portion of the country, because I know that the show will not go on the screen unless

the program precedes it on the air."[58]

Thus, once again, King-Trendle's strategies for exploiting *The Green Hornet* built upon prior experiences with *The Lone Ranger* property, this time leading the licensor to seek the type of complete geographic coverage that NBC promised would come with a national sponsor. As the next section discusses, however, the national spotlight brought with it some unanticipated difficulties for the company and its property.

NATIONAL PROBLEMS

By April 1939, King-Trendle sought out a national sponsor for *The Green Hornet*. In a letter to the N. W. Ayer & Son ad agency, the licensor suggested that a food product sponsor would be ideal and that the imminent cancellation of regional sponsors on the West Coast (where *The Green Hornet* had been sponsored by Jell-Well) now made a nationally sponsored coast-to-coast series a possibility. The letter made clear that the company was no longer willing to accept regional sponsors with limited station coverage, arguing that *The Green Hornet* had already been built up for a national advertiser.[59] On November 12, 1939, King-Trendle jumped ship from Mutual to NBC, which offered more stations, with the intent of

landing a national sponsor. The relationship was short lived.

On January 18, 1940, Trendle wrote to Kiggins at NBC expressing his dismay over the network's failures to find sponsorship for the series. "You know, I made the change from Mutual to NBC because you fellows were so enthusiastic and were quite positive that within a month or so you could get a sponsor. In making that change, I gave up a Chicago sponsor, a New York sponsor and a Southern state sponsor all of whom were willing to start immediately."[60] Kiggins's response was that perhaps both parties had engaged in some "wishful thinking" and that "rightfully or wrongfully," ad agencies were insisting that the program cost too much and that, additionally, the two-times-per-week provision limited prospective sponsors to those with budgets exceeding $750,000.[61] Whereas King-Trendle's price per episode previously had varied depending on the size of each local market, determining a cumulative national price tag for the property was a bit more difficult. Kiggins suggested that the series could be sold if it were aired once weekly for $2500/week with an increasing option, rather than the current $5000 asking price for twice weekly.[62] Trendle countered by suggesting that he could let one broadcast per week go for an asking price of $3500/week.[63] Whether through further negotiation or misunderstanding, a March 8,

1940 internal memo to NBC salesmen stated that The *Green Hornet* would now be available twice per week at $3500.[64] While Kiggins objected that such a price slash would encourage other sponsors to wait for price drops, by April 8, 1940, NBC was offering the series to the Young & Rubicam ad agency for $2200/week for a single episode guaranteed for 26-weeks.[65] Young & Rubicam passed and by August 20, 1940, King-Trendle had returned *The Green Hornet* to the Mutual Broadcasting System and its regional sponsorship arrangement.[66]

A return to the past was not in the cards, as local stations and sponsors, sensing King-Trendle's weakened position and seeking compensation for the inconvenience of being dropped in favor a national sponsor that failed to materialize, demanded greatly reduced rates. For example, Dick Ross at Station KMO in Tacoma, WA argued, "in view of the shift back to Mutual following the somewhat turbulent period of adjustment, we are wondering about the feasibility of renewing for another year." Ross suggested that if King-Trendle reduced its rate to $7.50 per half-hour episode (a return to the local sales market entailed a return to the local market price tag as well), it might be able to broker a deal with a sponsor.[67] Hicks tried to counter that $15 per episode was the lowest King-Trendle would go, adding that with the release of the upcoming

Green Hornet film serial sequel from Universal Pictures in January 1941, the program would be appreciated by audiences as it had never been before.[68]

Universal Pictures, however, saw matters differently. The first film serial had been released just as *The Green Hornet* was being switched from Mutual to NBC, resulting in neither broadcast system offering much cooperation in terms of cross-promotion.[69] While it was hopeful that the situation would not repeat itself with the sequel, its concern reveals just how important stability was to the cross merchandising practices licensors promoted. Undoubtedly, the move from Mutual to NBC had been timed to coincide with the release of the film serial in order to maximize the market reach for both, but the unwillingness of either NBC or Mutual to work with Universal during this transitional period to cross-promote also suggests the vulnerability of licensors reliant upon cooperation from mutually exclusive media outlets they did not fully control. Thus, unable to produce statistical evidence of the cross-benefit to a station like KMO to keep *The Green Hornet* at a higher rate due to the imminent release of the film serial, King-Trendle failed to secure many of the markets it originally had under the first Mutual contract. By January 1942, King-Trendle had jumped back to NBC and had re-embraced the search for a

national sponsor, this time at a greatly reduced rate: $1500 for one half-hour episode per week.[70]

AUDIENCE CONFUSION

Though outwardly, NBC argued that sponsor difficulties were due to King-Trendle's hefty price tag for *The Green Hornet*, internally discussion focused on the unsuitability of the series for children and concerns over upsetting important constituencies like Parent-Teacher's Associations.[71] Internal memos debated whether the series was truly intended for adult or child listeners, seeing greater commercial potential with the latter but a quick escape route from a moral quagmire by promoting the former. In the end, sales materials emphasized the series' appeal to both adults and juveniles. This confusion inevitably played an important part in the series failure to land a sponsor.

As early as November 15, 1939, only several weeks after NBC made its deal with King-Trendle, Margaret Cuthbert, in charge of monitoring children's programming at NBC, sent a memo to Phillips Carlin, president of the network, that objected to her having been kept out of the loop and warned that *The Green Hornet* had a bad reputation with parents. Gendering her argument, Cuthbert stated, "I feel it might have

been wise if I had had the opportunity to tell you how women feel about The GREEN HORNET before you took it on... We cannot expect the continued support of [Parent-Teacher Association President] Mrs. Milligan and her various groups if our intent is to continue with programs that the women do not approve of. They are our support!"[72] Cuthbert's objections were echoed by James R. Angell, who pointed to the difficulty of maintaining coherent policies across such a large company and argued for the need for better centralization.[73]

Angell also suggested that the assumption that because the program would air at a late hour it would not be heard by children was "fallacious," and expressed dismay that "the program suffers from some of the defects which have been most vigorously criticized by women's organizations."[74] Significantly, none of the memos exchanged ever identified the precise objections of women's organizations, but rather expressed concern that the complaints will bring negative publicity to the network. While it is possible that these objections were so thoroughly known as to not warrant repetition, these omissions are also revealing of NBC's bottom-line concerns - not with content, but public perception. Consequently, NBC's response to the problem was not to alter the content (which it most likely could not have done in any event, given King-

Trendle's proprietary rights over the radio production) or cancel the contract, but to shift the target market emphasis. Thus, Bertha Brainard issued a memo that clearly stipulated that even if *The Green Hornet* were to be sold during a children's time slot (normally late afternoon/ early evening), "it still must be pointed for adult appeal... This means that even the commercials must not urge 'ask your mother to buy so-and-so...' but must be sold directly to grown-ups."[75]

That the same memo supported both the airing of the program during a children's time slot *and* the exclusive targeting of adults indicates how confused NBC was over what to do with *The Green Hornet*. This confusion stemmed, in part, from NBC's desire both to appease and differentiate itself from watchdog organizations. Thus, Janet MacRorie responded to Brainard that "while from a broadcast point of view we may be aware that this program is not intended for child-listening, that belief will have no weight with pressure groups... we [must] be prepared for the criticism that will rain down on us, should the program be sold."[76] Meanwhile, I.E. Showerman, taking the opposite position to MacRorie, responded to Brainard's suggested restrictions by sarcastically stating, "I may have been deluded but I am under the quaint impression that we crave to sell the Blue Network and that commercially we should like nothing

more than to sell The Green Hornet on the Blue Network."[77] Clearly, NBC's acquisition of *The Green Hornet* and the ensuing debate over what to do with it are revealing of internal struggles within the broadcasting company between maintaining its moral high ground as defender of quality programming and its commercial imperative to attract sponsors under increasingly competitive conditions.

As Michele Hilmes has argued, tensions between public service and profits were an ongoing concern for NBC, precisely because its business model required that educational and cultural programming be commercially supported. NBC's chief rival, CBS, had no such qualms, since the latter was envisioned as a commercial enterprise from its inception.[78] By the late 1930s, competition from CBS, the Depression, and the Federal Radio Commission's (later FCC) 1932 lift on the ban on recorded commercials had pushed NBC further in the direction of commercial programming. The percentage of its sponsored programs rose from 23 percent in 1932 to 49.4 percent in 1940. Educational children's programming dropped from 3.6 percent to 0.4 percent of NBC's schedule during the same time period.[79] Still, as discussions of *The Green Hornet's* suitability for children versus its commercial potential suggest, this transition was protracted and much debated, and was not an immediate

reversal for NBC. Perhaps not surprisingly, in order to quell such tensions, Sydney N. Strotz shifted the internal discussion away from the child concern toward the contractual stipulation that the program be sold twice per week which, he argued, greatly reduced the number of potential sponsors.[80] This too was the response NBC gave Trendle when he complained about the network's failure to land a sponsor.

Even as the debate over *The Green Hornet's* audience raged internally, NBC already had begun to stress the adult appeal of the program as early as September 1939, while it was still only selling the series as a transcription. Under the blunt title ADULT AUDIENCE, the sales brochure stated, "'The Green Hornet' program feature is designed for grown-up appeal... King-Trendle's idea in creating this mystery drama was to satisfy the innate desires of adult listeners who enjoy mystery thrillers as a form of relaxation."[81] Though this was definitely a shift away from how the program had been marketed by the Detroit Creamery less than two years earlier, the brochure could not make a complete break with the past. In a proverbial attempt to have its cake and it eat it too, the adult audience pitch continued, "But children in countless numbers do listen to 'The Green Hornet' So much so that a prospective sponsor desiring the sales influence of children upon their parents, could use the juvenile

audience alone to great advantage."[82]

In truth, King-Trendle could not completely abandon the potential appeal of the property to children, not because they constituted the actual listenership for the series (though a 1940 NBC survey suggested that children, 3-17 years old did, in fact, make up 69 percent of the audience, further deflating the adult claims),[83] but because, financially, the licensor's merchandising contracts were still largely invested in children's commodities. The brochure listed as available premiums a Green Hornet gun, a mask, a seal ring, and a model car,[84] all materials produced by manufacturers still under contract. King-Trendle earned a royalty on each sale and was contractually obligated to promote the materials to potential sponsors. Even more revealing of the incongruity of marketing the property for adult audiences was King-Trendle's imposed set of restrictions on sponsorship. Manufacturers of alcoholic beverages, loan companies, (certain) patent medicines, and cigarettes were prohibited from sponsoring the series.[85] The elimination of sponsors whose products were deemed "bad for children" within a promotional brochure arguing that the program was intended for adults pretty much sums up the network's confusion over selling the series.

A November 1939 NBC sales brochure, promoting the series'

availability coast-to-coast via live transmission, continued to stress the dual appeal of the series - "it is a completely 'grown-up; program... [It] also has a large juvenile following"[86] - but added a selling ploy designed to identify firmly *The Green Hornet* as an adult series. It drew a comparison between the King-Trendle production and three other popular NBC series, calling *The Green Hornet* "a sort of cross between 'Big Town' and 'Mr. District Attorney' with the added mystery flavor of 'The Shadow,'" adding as an afterthought, "but it is an imitation of no program – its appeal is distinctly its own."[87]

There was a definite explosion of vigilante heroes on radio, in pulp fiction, and in comics during the Depression years. As the series' NBC listed suggest, these characters were not confined to only one genre, but could be found in crime procedurals as well as in mystery/thrillers. Even the Lone Ranger, despite its western setting, qualified as a vigilante, particularly in the earlier episodes. Most of these shows featured heroes with cloaked identities who took justice into their own hands because of either police corruption or inefficiency. These heroes responded to the social conditions of the Depression, fought for the little man and advocated a kind of rugged individualism, but often also indirectly argued in favor of bourgeois values. The Green Hornet's alter ego, for instance,

was a publishing magnate with his own servant, but who fought grafts and crooked officials who took advantage of the public's desperation. The Shadow's alter ego, Lamont Cranston, was also a rich playboy. Even a science fiction hero like Superman began his crime-fighting career as a rugged individualist seeking vigilante justice instead of reform. By the time the US entered World War II, many of these figures had been transformed into super-patriots who helped the police and local government officials instead of offering an alternative to them.[88]

Though intended to situate *The Green Hornet* within a particularly adult genre and thus attract sponsors interested in reaching this audience, the comparison to other programs tapped into a central anxiety felt by King-Trendle regarding its properties, namely how to represent an intangible idea as distinct and proprietarily owned. The next section will explore a series of these concerns about ownership and representation surrounding the Green Hornet property. A memo issued by Trendle to his right-hand man Campbell lay bare the concerns the licensor had over having *The Green Hornet* compared, even if favorably, with other radio properties, not owned by King-Trendle (it was no problem, however, - in fact, it was encouraged - if *The Green Hornet* were compared with *The Lone Ranger*). Trendle stated, "we do not want to, in any way, create the

thought that we have stolen anything from any other programs to produce this one as they definitely followed [The Green Hornet] on the air, each trying in its own way to come as closely to it as possible without infringing."[89] In place of NBC's above quoted description, Trendle substituted a clunky, yet unmistakably clear comparative explanation of his series: "Since then, programs such as 'Big Town' and 'Mr. District Attorney' have been produced and as an idea of the type of story of 'The Green Hornet' we might say that 'Big Town', 'Mr. District Attorney' and 'The Shadow' combined into one program would most clearly describe it, i.e., they have followed it - it is not an imitation of any program - its appeal is distinctly its own."[90]

While Trendle's concern that his program not appear to imitate another's resulted from increased competition in the radio market as well as from his own legal struggles with *The Lone Ranger* during this exact time period (see below), it was also indicative of a larger set of concerns over how best to represent an intangible property in order to imbue it with a marketable personality (or, more importantly, to not detract from its saleable qualities).

REPRESENTATIONAL CONCERNS: REALISM, RACE, AND

OWNERSHIP

The representation of radio properties was a particularly precarious business. Both the Lone Ranger and the Green Hornet were supposed to be mysterious figures. Their existence on radio allowed audiences to imagine them as larger than life. Their iconic status depended to a certain extent on their idealized images, which defied representation. Since licensors also depended on marketing, merchandising, and trans-media contracts to exploit their brands, however, a tension existed between the ideals properties like the Lone Ranger and Green Hornet stood for and their actual embodiment. Where representation was necessary, licensors emphasized the importance of brand continuity across media, choosing actors who looked most like their properties rather than changing the brand image to suit a given performer's appearance. Obviously, real actors voiced the characters on radio and represented them on the screen or in publicity, but King-Trendle saw these performers as invisible placeholders at best, potential threats to the licensor's brand ownership at worst. The Lone Ranger and the Green Hornet worked best for their owners when the actor's portraying them remained anonymous and interchangeable. This invisibility would become increasingly difficult to sustain as the properties expanded from radio to visual media and merchandise that required a face

that audiences could identify with the brand, but one that also met the idealized expectations built up on the radio. In the case of the Green Hornet, these concerns were further complicated by the shift in imagined audiences for the property. As the Green Hornet was transformed from a children's hero into a serious crime fighter appealing to adults, it became increasingly important to represent the brand realistically, since it was imagined that adult audiences were not taken in by fantastical imagery. Given the Green Hornet's masked identity, however, "realistically" representing him would prove to be no simple feat. Additionally, as tensions mounted between the US and Japan, representing the nationality of the Green Hornet's valet, Kato, also became an object of concern.

King-Trendle not only sought to have its properties stand out as unique, but also sought to submerge the names of the actors playing key roles on the series "in deference to high-lighting the characters they play."[91] As far back as 1933, Trendle had sold *The Lone Ranger* as popular and affordable because of its focus on character rather than star-power. There was economic advantage in preventing any one actor from becoming too associated with a particular property, as this meant Trendle could keep salaries low while licensing the character widely across media and merchandising outlets without either the performer demanding a

royalty or the manufacturer requiring his inclusion in the marketing of the product (once these properties made the leap to television, such controlled separation of actor and character would become impossible). As both the Lone Ranger and the Green Hornet were sold as mysterious figures with larger-than-life personalities, there was further economic advantage in concealing the identities of the real life actors who played them so as to maintain the illusion. Finally, as intellectual property, Trendle had a vested interest in keeping the Lone Ranger and the Green Hornet un-associated with any particular performer (or writer/ artist) in order to prevent confusion over his ownership rights to the property.

To this effect, Striker admitted that visual representations of the Lone Ranger were left intentionally vague "as far as facial characteristics were concerned, so that children could visualize what they wanted to."[92] As a radio property, the Lone Ranger's personality had been linked explicitly to his voice. WXYZ station manager, Harold True described efforts to land a voice that was "outstanding" and "easily discernable from others" with a "stentorian tone".[93] Trendle confessed that said voice was intentionally classed, but not intended to be geographically specific to any particular part of the country. "When we selected a voice, we wanted a man who spoke the King's English correctly, and had no particular dialect,

but he was supposed to portray a well-educated rancher... from any section of the country."[94]

The Lone Ranger's physical dimensions were devised only to provide listeners with the barest means of distinguishing him from the other characters and were left purposely vague and "idealistic."[95] In court, Striker testified that he made the Lone Ranger tall, "to stand above the rest of the people that would be visualized by the listeners," but otherwise he described the character's appearance in very generic terms. "He had to be heroic, active, good-looking in a rugged, masculine way, and the sort of person that could be figured on to dominate any situation in which he might find himself."[96] The Lone Ranger's most discernable feature, his mask, was intended to add "mystery to the character, for showmanship purposes." [97]

Of course, this approach created a tension inasmuch as the marketing and exploitation strategies for both properties relied upon developing premiums and merchandise that depicted the heroes and accurately captured the essence of their personalities. Hicks testified that early publicity photos of the Lone Ranger were necessitated by demands made by radio magazines and newspapers because of the popularity of the program.[98] While Striker admitted that they made certain concessions in

concretizing the character for the Republic motion picture, such as adjusting his height and weight to conform to more realistic proportions for the sake of casting, it was otherwise maintained that the contractual specifications of the Lone Ranger's appearance were intended simply to conform to those characteristics already established and made popular by the radio broadcasts, with which the public was already familiar.[99] In other words, no visual elements of the character were intended to remind listeners of any particular person. As King-Trendle's chief counsel, Raymond Meurer, repeatedly instructed witnesses at the various trials the company took part in defending its rights to the property, "Bring out also from the start that from the time of the origin of the broadcasts the Lone Ranger has always been depicted as a masked character, and that the idea behind this was to make him a mysterious and unique character that could not be identified with any particular individual or actor."[100]

As such, while Trendle worked to submerge the identities of his performers and not to have his series compared with others, he put equal energy into monitoring the ways his characters were represented. This became especially true of the Green Hornet character and his valet Kato, as the marketing for the series attempted to position it for an adult market, rather than as kids fare, and as cultural attitudes toward Asians in the US

began to shift with the advent of World War II.

A series of memos exchanged between Trendle and Hicks in 1939 described in great detail a set of Green Hornet action drawings being prepared by an artist named Ward for an upcoming promotional campaign. The suggested revisions that Hicks repeatedly made were largely concerned with 1) capturing the essence, but also the accuracy of the characters, particularly the Green Hornet, 2) the need for greater realism in the drawings, and 3) the depiction of an appropriate, if also appropriately inscrutable, Asianness for Kato. An early memo suggested that sketch #1 needed changing because the car drawn by Ward did not match the radio descriptions of Black Beauty, according to 1938 scripts. Hicks also commented that the Green Hornet should be drawn wearing a "richly expensive muffler" because this too was an important element in many scripts.[101] Hicks assumed that audiences would become distracted by the lack of continuity between radio imagination and visual image. He also recommended that the smile on the Green Hornet's face be eliminated because "when THE GREEN HORNET takes his mystery car, the grimness of purpose requires features of determination."[102] Here, Hicks shifted from maintaining visual continuity with the radio scripts to concerns over capturing the appropriate personality for the character. As a

radio personality, listeners and sponsors could imbue whatever characteristics they so desired on the Green Hornet using only their imagination. Premiums risked upsetting this imaginary bond and therefore required careful monitoring of everything from the positions of the characters appeared to their facial details, which were both purposely broad (with only one or two specific denotations of character, such as the Green Hornet's muffler or mask) and subtly expressive, in order to capture the essence of the character's personality without making him too concrete, and thus too unlike what listeners had imagined.

As the series was being pitched as an adult crime drama, there was also added emphasis placed on capturing the character and his actions realistically, distinguishing this current incarnation from the more fanciful and less detailed depictions of the Green Hornet that had adorned 1937 premium glass container giveaways. The Detroit Creamery had sold cottage cheese bottles with sketches of the Green Hornet in which only the character's head appeared (bottles featuring the other three main characters, Kato, Mike Axford, and Lenore Kase each depicted them from the torso up) [see image #2]. The Green Hornet wore a derby hat on top of a green hornet-shaped head. No effort was made to distinguish whether the character was wearing a mask or just was a well-dressed insect. By 1939,

the question of what a realistic mask might look like was a central concern for Hicks in his critiques of Ward's drawings. In an attempt to combine an emphasis on realistic representation with the need to brand the character properly as unique, Ward suggested that by placing a large green hornet emblem at the center of the hero's mask, the image would be easily distinguished even when reduced to cartoon size and would also designate an appropriate opening in the mask through which the Green Hornet might speak effectively. Hicks argued, "otherwise if the mask has no opening it would be presumed that THE GREEN HORNET would be talking through cloth."[103] In another memo, Hicks recommended softening the highlighting on the Green Hornet's face because "shows too theatrical and make-uppish in the reproductions."[104] Ward sent countless sketches of masks designed to appear realistic, and went as far as to embroider a cloth mask with eye slits and a sewed-on Hornet insignia in his efforts to design what the "real" Green Hornet might wear [see images 3-10].[105]

Hicks' concern for realistically depicting the Green Hornet extended beyond the physical representation of the character to encompass the settings and actions in which he was engaged. A September 11, 1939 memo to Trendle contemplated questionable details regarding the lighting in one of Wards drawings, in which the Green Hornet's shadow is

supposed to scare a table of crooks. “Obviously to throw the shadow of The Green Hornet on the wall the lighting would have to be in back of him, which would light up the four occupants of the table to a greater degree than is shown.”[106] The emerging emphasis on realistic depictions had much to do with the imagined adult audience for the series, an audience that would not be as easily appeased as children and would demand a higher standard of quality and “realism” from their entertainment. Hicks’ concern with accuracy in these sketches seems also to have stemmed from his desire to avoid accusations that the images over-stimulated the imagination of audiences. In his critique of sketch #6, Hicks argued that a chair should be removed from the picture because it might be construed as about to poke one of the racketeers the Green Hornet is fighting in the back and “may cause some people to allow their imagination to run to cruelty” [see image #11].[107] This concern might have stemmed from King-Trendle’s continued efforts to sell the series both as adult in its orientation and as appealing to children. In a similar manner, the depiction of the Green Hornet mask differed on radio than it did as a giveaway, because it had stirred negative imaginings (it looked like a burglar’s mask) and was unsafe for children.

While confusion and concern over striking the right chord with

different audiences (or, more accurately, with the assumptions of sponsors, networks, regulators, and advocacy groups about these audiences) played a part in how the Green Hornet was represented, shifting cultural attitudes toward Asians during this period framed how Kato was depicted. Between 1936-1944, Kato was described in various promotional materials and memos as Japanese, then Filipino, then Korean, and finally Filipino again. Brian Locke has argued that inscrutability has long been a stereotype used when depicting Asian men.[108] Kato's shifting national allegiances certainly could be explained as part this broader signifying practice. However, it is far more likely that Kato's changing nationality corresponded with shifting US relations with the Far East as the countries moved closer toward war. Kato's nationality is what kept his loyalty and subservience to the Green Hornet unquestioned. At the same time, King-Trendle was emphatic in both its attempts to depict the character's nationality realistically and to ascribe general stereotypes about Asians that Kato's appearance was intended to convey (because his physicality and facial features were seen as the surest visual marker of his personality). Kato's depiction was intended both to distinguish what sort of Asian he was and to emphasize the general differences between all Asians and Whites.

Michele Hilmes has discussed the ways early radio attempted to counter cultural anxieties over its ability to transcend visual representations and upset social hierarchies, potentially blurring the race, gender, and/or class status of the performers whose voices entered the private home by "obsessively rehearsing those distinctions."[109] Hilmes discusses institutionally sanctioned and monitored strategies of assigning linguistic markers to difference for each ethnic group in order to make them more easily identifiable.[110] Black characters spoke in minstrel dialect, regardless of how the actual performer spoke (and regardless of whether the performer was actually black), while Asian characters spoke in broken English often dispensing "Eastern wisdom" through "folksy sayings."[111] While Hilmes suggests that such efforts to distinguish racial groups worked to reinforce white normative values by projecting culturally undesirable traits onto "easily identifiable, culturally devalued minority groups," Russo's analysis of *The Green Hornet* radio program suggests that Asian stereotypes also played important narrative functions in allowing the white hero to move between the legitimate and corrupt worlds necessitated by his dual identity.[112]

In fact, Russo argues that *The Green Hornet*'s narrative formula revolved around Kato's dual and inseparable role as Britt Reid's valet and

the Green Hornet's sidekick, because the character embodied both stereotypical Orientalist discourses associated with "yellow peril" and had domesticated these attributes in the service of his white master. "Yellow Peril" discourses imbued Orientals with "immense, unknowable power" that combined Western knowledge with mysterious "Eastern" abilities that could be used to mobilize an attack against the West.[113] Oriental access to these dark forces cast them as "indelibly alien" from whites and a "contaminating element" that whites needed to guard against.[114] Yet, according to popular myth (as rehearsed through popular cultural representations like *The Green Hornet* radio series), these same "yellow peril" powers could be marshaled by whites who received training from Orientals, usually in exchange for having saved the latter's life. Using somewhat contradictory logic, these all-powerful Orientals then freely accepted a subservient role to their new white masters. Thus, Russo concludes, Kato provided the Green Hornet access to the criminal underworld as well as the power to fight these forces. "Referencing Orientalist themes of yellow peril, *The Green Hornet*'s representational strategies allowed Reid to draw upon the power, support, and knowledge of the Orient to rectify problems that cannot be solved within the law... *The Green Hornet* literally and figuratively domesticates the power of the

Oriental to structure its own ideological position."[115]

Accordingly, *The Green Hornet* radio series played up Kato's Japanese identity from its very inception, indelibly linking his subservient status to his Oriental identity through the often-used stock phrase that described him at the beginning of each episode as the Green Hornet's "faithful Jap valet." Kato's Japanese nationality allowed the writers on the series not only to tap into Orientalist stereotypes, but specifically Japanese ones, which included loyalty and industriousness.[116] Kato would remain Japanese until February 1938, when Japan's invasion of China and sinking of the US gunboat, Panang, called the commercial viability of the character's national identity into question. Tellingly, this was also the period when King-Trendle was attempting to build upon its local success with Jersey Milk by extending the Green Hornet brand beyond the Michigan Radio Network. Still, as Russo asserts, "*The Green Hornet* could not erase Kato's Asian identity completely because its racial associations were too important to the program's narrative structure."[117] Nor could Kato become a universal Oriental stereotype because of growing concerns over Asian unification propaganda circulated by Japan. Kato needed a new national identity, and in 1939 he became Filipino. While Russo argues that the transference of Orientalist stereotypes unto a

malleable Asian national body allowed *The Green Hornet* radio program to "use race as a flexible tool that adjusted to changing situations,"[118] I contend that representing Kato's Asian identity, both literally and figuratively, and its function within the larger Green Hornet brand proved a somewhat more difficult proposition.

As early as October 20, 1936, less than a full year after *The Green Hornet* radio series had debuted, problems emerged over how best to represent Kato. In discussing the poor quality of a photo giveaway of the character, Hicks wrote to Gaynor at the Don Lee Broadcasting System that the licensor was hesitant to take another photo from a different angle (one that would put the character into clearer focus), because Kato is "a difficult subject to photograph, particularly for the one reason that unless you get the right angle, there is danger of making him look like a Chinese, which of course to a Jap is next to Hari-Kari."[119] Hicks' explanation of the choice of photograph (a picture of Kato "well encased" behind the wheel of the Black Beauty and taken at a distance), reveals how racial logic played a part in determining even the most minute of details such as a free giveaway. Interestingly, however, Hicks pointed to another group as determining King-Trendle's policies, suggesting that the licensor would not want to offend the Japanese community by making Kato appear to be

Chinese. Hicks' argument articulates that nationality matters in how Kato was depicted (possibly for the mere sake of maintaining continuity with the radio series), but effaces questions of race by suggesting that this difference mattered less to white audiences than it did to Japanese and Chinese Americans.

This concern with realistically capturing Kato's Japaneseness extended to supplying Ward with photos of actual Japanese men taken from magazines such as *Asia*.[120] At the same time, verisimilitude was tempered by stereotypical assumptions about Japanese physicality, which required that it be far less daunting than its white equivalent. On March 10, 1939, Hicks wrote to Ward, encouraging him to use the magazine photos, but also reminding him that Kato "actually weighs 98 pounds, is just a trifle over 5 ft tall and has been so exploited in our publicity."[121] Overtly drawing a connection between this physical description and the personality traits it was meant to convey, Hicks continued, "Mr. Trendle wants a KATO who shows intelligence, affability, servility, alertness and a certain sparkle"[122]

Finally, in a nod toward changing US attitudes toward Japan as the latter's expansionist policies threatened the US' own presence in the Far East, Hicks argues that these personality traits are intended to "remove all

traces of the usual Japanese immobility and austereness."[123] Hicks' strategy was to downplay the racialized characteristics that would mark Kato as a dangerous, intransigent and untrustworthy Japanese character while playing up his subservience to the Green Hornet (denoted through his physical frailty). At the same time, Hicks had the Japanese characters originally included on Kato's photo removed because of concern that they might be construed as implying a "code," defending this choice by pointing to a complaint lodged by a Californian, "where Japs are watched very closely."[124] Finally, by late June 1939, under mounting concern that Kato's Japanese ancestry might have a negative impact on the show, Hicks had Ward "soften" Kato's features in order to make him appear more Filipino. In a letter to Trendle, Hicks commented on these changes "there is just enough leaning toward Filipino to remove the stigma you were mentioning regarding Japs."[125] By August, Hicks was gloating, "Ward has removed the Japanese effect quite successfully."[126] Trendle and Hicks' choice of Filipino as Kato's "new" nationality might have been inspired by the US's colonial history with the Philippines and the continued American paternalism and military presence in that country. When Japan invaded the Philippines in 1940, Kato became Korean.[127]

Kato's diminutive physical description never changed, even as his

national heritage flip-flopped. The only visual elements that appear to have been altered were Kato's facial expressions, centered on his eyes and mouth, in order to communicate his faithful and servile relationship to the Green Hornet. This consistency suggests that what mattered most was maintaining Kato's stereotypical Asian inferiority but also unquestioning loyalty to his white boss ,and that the interchange of national heritages merely reflected American-centric assumptions about whatever East Asian country fit the bill best at any given point in time. As Russo summarizes, "Kato's Filipino status allowed the show to maintain its Orientalist modes of representation without the disquieting connotations of the Japanese co-prosperity sphere."[128] In the case of NBC's depiction of the character as Korean instead of Filipino, none of publicity materials were changed other than the name of the country, indicating that the assumed cultural traits Kato possessed were not rendered visually, as much as associatively with particular countries and not others. Whether Kato actually looked Japanese, Filipino, or Korean mattered less than what nationality the drawing or photograph claimed to represent.

Of course, while Kato's nationality was interchangeable, his ethnicity was not. Evidencing both a clear racial hierarchy and an assumed representability of moral defects attributable to different racialized groups,

Hicks' replacement as sales manager, L. B. Beeuwkes decried the misrepresentation of Kato in the proposed 1944 Green Hornet comic strip. Beeuwkes argued that "Kato looks more like a Senegambian (coon to you and me) than a Philipino [sic]" because his mouth was too "wide and lascivious-lipped."[129] Even as Beeuwkes drew unwarranted racial connections between physical features and character values, his reasoning for pointing out the misrepresentation continued to be couched in the logic that visual continuity was essential to maintaining consistency across licensed Green Hornet brands. He insisted that since Kato was a regular feature in the comic strip, he needed to be drawn accurately from the start.[130]

That the Green Hornet comic strip failed to materialize (King-Trendle never successfully launched a Green Hornet comic strip) likely had more to do with King-Trendle's failures to generate the necessary cross-promotional environment for the brand than with Kato's ambiguous national and ethnic heritage. The licensor's concerns over precisely these representational issues, however, suggest both the centrality of race to the Green Hornet narrative formula and the racist assumptions that under-girded its continuity. The Green Hornet's authority relied upon his access to and mastery over certain racialized forces, namely the mystical and dark

"yellow peril," which required Kato to continue to embody those qualities regardless of which national identity the brand's creators ascribed to him. Kato's national identity could change, but his function within the Green Hornet formula had to remain continuous. Thus, the attribution of cultural meanings to particular visual cues took on increased importance when the brand attempted to extend beyond radio into premiums, merchandise, and other visual media precisely because they risked upsetting not just how Kato was imagined as looking by radio listeners, but also the role he played in legitimating the Green Hornet's authority.

King-Trendle's obsession with upholding certain continuities between the various texts its brands adorned only intensified in the postwar era, as the licensor began reaping even greater financial rewards (in turn, reinforcing the rigidity of the profitable formula) and faced increasing pressures to maintain control over how its properties were exploited. Even prior to World War II, King-Trendle's efforts to extend their brands into other media and sell their value as icons existing apart from the various merchandise it sold led to legal struggles to delineate how precisely the licensor could claim proprietary ownership over intangible ideas, especially when those ideas were used to sell non-competitive products. The next section will explore how legal battles over

the Lone Ranger both legitimated the roles licensors played in managing trans-mediated brands and, in turn, their exclusive ownership over them.

LEGAL BATTLES

In the late 1930s and early 1940s, representational concerns exceeded merely aligning racial stereotypes with national identities and anxieties over whether the masked Green Hornet would look "realistic." Representation was also a hotly contested legal issue, as Trendle and company first faced accusations that they had stolen the concept of the Lone Ranger, and then had to defend their copyright against multiple parties who they claimed were trying to profit from the goodwill King-Trendle had built with the Lone Ranger. While King-Trendle struggled to replicate their successful exploitation of the Lone Ranger with the Green Hornet, they also encountered unexpected difficulties in holding onto their exclusive rights to exploit their famous fictional cowboy.

In part, all of these legal problems were precisely the result of King-Trendle's calculated and successful expansion into other media outlets. All three legal battles over the Lone Ranger related to and extended out of King-Trendle's licensing deal with Republic Pictures to produce the 1938 Lone Ranger serial. All three cases also related to

questions of property ownership over an intangible, but highly profitable, entity and the relationship between a non-corporeal idea and those claiming the right to represent it. The resolution of these cases evoked some of the recurring cultural anxieties, themes, and business strategies that had structured and inspired King-Trendle's licensing operations for its properties: the representability of personality and the protection of children.

King-Trendle entered into a production deal with Republic Productions, Inc on June 22, 1937 to produce a 15-part film serial based on the licensor's Lone Ranger radio personality. Trendle sent Fran Striker, the series head writer, to Hollywood to consult on the script and help visualize the largely unseen hero so that he might conform to the imaginations of radio listeners going to see his exploits on screen. The first installment was released in early 1938 and would play a significant role in expanding the national reach of the property.

In July 1938, Buck Jones, a professional cowboy and part-time movie actor filed suit against Republic Pictures claiming that the Lone Ranger serial had stolen its representation of the lead hero from his own established personality and was, thus, profiting from the reputation and goodwill Jones already had established. In his accusation, Jones pointed

out that he had starred in more than two-dozen Western film serials (several for Republic), often playing a heroic role similar to that of the Lone Ranger and that he too rode a white horse named Silver. In turn, Republic filed suit against King-Trendle, who was contractually obliged to defend against any legal claims made on properties it licensed. King-Trendle now had to prove that the Lone Ranger had not been inspired by Buck Jones and that the idea of how the character should act and appear were wholly the licensor's own.

Trendle's chief counsel, Raymond Meurer, who would later become a partner in The Lone Ranger, Inc., and Green Hornet, Inc., immediately assembled a list of items to be used in the company's defense. This list included many of the original correspondences between Striker and James Jewell, as well as early promotional materials developed to exploit the property. The same materials that the licensor habitually recycled and sent out to potential clients would now become the primary evidence in its defense, used in order to demonstrate the popularity and growth of the property prior to the release of the Republic serial.[131] Though Jones' film career also predated the radio series, his lawsuit targeted only the Republic serial and, as such, King-Trendle only had to establish that the radio series had popularized the film version of the radio

character, not Jones. As A.H. Williams, Trendle's deposition lawyer explained, over the objections of Jones' attorney Karl E. Scott, that said materials were "colored" by their sales promotion function and contained claims that were little more than hearsay, "the testimony as to these matters is for the purpose of showing the progressive and increased popularity of the program."[132]

Trendle, Hicks, Striker, True and Brace Beemer --the then-radio announcer and later voice of the Lone Ranger, Harold True all testified as to the inspirations for the Lone Ranger. Repeatedly, Scott raised the question of whether any of them had ever heard of or seen Buck Jones, live or in films. All denied they had. Yet, responding to the need to acknowledge that all inspiration has roots in some form of imitation, the defendants repeatedly fell back on drawing connections between the Lone Ranger and character types, as well as fictional figures long in the public domain. True testified that "of course, I think that any time we... try to create a character, I think we are all somewhat prone to imitation...my ideal of this man was a portrayal like the character of Robin Hood by Doug Fairbanks."[133] Similarly, Striker admitted that "it is the custom of writers to always visualize someone or group of people in creating a character. In this case, I visualized a man such as Robin Hood might have

been."[134]

The oft-repeated comparison of the Lone Ranger to a Robin Hood type was a calculated choice of inspirations. Though the characters shared little in common narratively (other than their vague heroic similarities), Robin Hood was an un-copyrighted character in the public domain whom King-Trendle could make claims to copying without risking a lawsuit. Still, almost all the defendants took the further step of saying that the Lone Ranger was inspired by a Robin Hood "type" character, further distancing their property from any direct attribution. In this manner, when True admitted that Douglas Fairbanks' portrayal of Robin Hood had inspired his own contributions to the Lone Ranger, he essentially was confessing only to imitating a characterization of a type, twice removed.

When living persons were mentioned, such as Fairbanks and Tom Mix, defendants were quick to point out that they had been inspired by either a character they had portrayed or a character value they possessed, not the actual physical or unique persona of these performers. Striker also admitted to drawing inspiration from Fairbanks, but was careful to qualify that it was "not from the appearance, but from the virile activity that he portrayed in a picture from a story I read in the Argosy magazine, one of the Zorro series."[135] Trendle denied any knowledge of Buck Jones,

instead evoked Tom Mix, another cowboy star, as an inspirational source. "We discussed Tom Mix during that discussion, as I recall it, as the type of character we thought The Lone Ranger ought to be, that is, a great big strong, hard-hitting, fast-riding cowboy type."[136] Generalizeable characteristics found in particular performances--such as being virile, active or hard-hitting--are not covered by copyright; the selective discussion of these qualities as demonstrated by particular performers, rather than the performers themselves, was calculated so as to admit that the Lone Ranger character bore resemblance to others, but was not a replication of a particular person or copyrighted character.

In preparing for the deposition, Meurer stressed that the use of different persons in publicity photos should be used as evidence that "no [one in] particular was being imitated."[137] He made the same argument about the use of multiple horses in publicity stills of Silver.[138] In court, even when Striker admitted on cross examination that others had told him of a cowboy actor named Buck Jones who rode a horse named Silver, he re-framed the comparison by stating "they pointed out that a movie actor was using the same name as The Lone Ranger for his horse."[139] The reversal made it seem as though Jones had stolen King-Trendle's idea, and not vice versa, though Scott quickly corrected Striker that Jones had been

riding Silver for nearly fifteen years, a full decade before the Lone Ranger was created.[140] Nonetheless, Striker's rhetorical inversion did have the desired effect of confirming that the Lone Ranger had popularized Silver, not Jones, a "fact" further testified to by Hicks and "confirmed" with publicity materials entered as evidence.[141]

King-Trendle defended its sole creation of the property through a circular logic that relied on pointing to the public's preconceptions of what the Lone Ranger looked like as justification for the way he was represented on screen and in publicity materials. It further pointed to Buck Jones' failure to bring suit against the company prior to the film serial, thus reducing his claims of infringement to physical and costume similarities. These, the licensor argued, either had been left purposely vague in order to conform to the imaginations of listeners or had been previously crafted for premium exploitation and showmanship via the radio program. Any physical or conceptual similarities, including a horse by the same name, that could be found between the Lone Ranger and Buck Jones were explained away as natural outgrowths of the need to represent the Lone Ranger's personality visually for publicity, premium, and popularity's sake; as such, they were both too general and too unique to the property to be rightfully compared. Regardless of whether or not King-

Trendle did draw any inspiration for the Lone Ranger from Buck Jones, its rhetorical inversion of who first popularized Silver and its careful admission to inspirations drawn from public domain characters and copyright-eligible character traits and performances successfully established their creative ownership over the property. The court found in Republic's favor and Jones was forced to withdraw his complaint.

Republic soon repaid this legal victory by trying to profit from the Lone Ranger's popularity itself once its contract with King-Trendle expired. After the second movie serial, *The Lone Ranger Rides Again* was released in 1939, the licensor moved to strike a deal with Universal Pictures, a company with greater exposure potential for the property than Republic because of its exhibition arrangement. Republic did not own its own theatrical chains or distribution arm like Universal did. Therefore, Republic's profits came only after distributors and exhibitors had taken their share. Since King-Trendle's earnings came from the gross receipts that the studio earned only after these groups had been paid, the licensor received substantially less from Republic than it stood to gain from Universal. Universal was also producing the Green Hornet serials. Republic set out to produce a film serial titled *The Lone Star Ranger* which, it claimed, bore no relation to the Lone Ranger and therefore was

not an infringement on King-Trendle's business.[142] Trendle disagreed and took Republic to court. Republic countersued that King-Trendle had breached its contract by not allowing them to match Universal's offer for another serial. The two companies settled out of court. Republic agreed to post notices on its publicity for *The Lone Star Ranger* that it bore no relation to the Lone Ranger and released King-Trendle to pursue a deal with Universal.[143] The net result stymied any further production of Lone Ranger serials or motion pictures during this period. Universal withdrew its offer, possibly out of concern that *The Lone Star Ranger* would take away from Lone Ranger box office receipts regardless of Republic's small-print clarifications, though also possibly due to the other major court battle King-Trendle was engaged in during this period over ownership rights to the Lone Ranger name across media – a battle King-Trendle initially would lose.

Perhaps the most significant court battle King-Trendle took part in defending its ownership rights, *The Lone Ranger Inc v Wallace Brothers Circus and Lee Powell*, was fought over actor Powell's performance as the Lone Ranger in the Wallace Brothers Circus, which the latter promoted as an appearance by "the original 'Lone Ranger'" or "'The Lone Ranger' in person."[144] Powell had appeared as the Lone Ranger in the first Republic

movie serial, which was also mentioned, though in small type, in the ads.[145] The Lone Ranger Inc claimed that Powell was infringing on its trademark by perpetuating a deception on the public over the origin of his performance and by seeking to profit from the goodwill King-Trendle had established with The Lone Ranger property on radio and elsewhere. Wallace Brothers and Powell contended that since they made no claim to be impersonating the Lone Ranger from the radio, it was their right to publicize Powell's appearance as the Lone Ranger in the films. Moreover, they defended Powell's right to use the Lone Ranger's famous call, "Hi Yo, Silver," which first had been used on the radio, on the grounds that Republic had released a full-length motion picture of the assembled serial under that same title, and that Powell was merely calling attention to this fact in his performances and publicity for the circus.

The lower courts originally sided with Powell against The Lone Ranger, Inc., drawing a distinction between the radio program and the films as entirely different and, thereby, non-competitive products that would not confuse the public. Trademark legislation is intended to protect the public against confusion and deception through the use of similar marks by competing businesses, and as such, should promote competition by facilitating comparison-shopping. It also has preserved the "goodwill"

that trademark owners have invested and generated in the property. Historically, there have been considerable struggles over defining what categories of business are in competition with one another so as to generate public confusion and, moreover, what defines “goodwill”. According to J. Thomas McCarthy, early arguments over trademark infringement often centered on whether plaintiffs and defendants were in direct competition with one another.[146]

It was only in the 1930s that a concerted effort to modernize trademark law was undertaken, with the initial draft of the Lanham Trademark Act, still the basis for all modern-day intellectual property law, and first introduced before Congress in 1938. Nonetheless, it would not be until 1946, with the passing of the Lanham Trademark Act and the establishment of secondary meaning justifications for ownership claims, that independent licensors would finally attain a secure base from which to operate. Secondary meanings become attached to suggestive and descriptive properties by demonstrating that the public has come to associate the brand name exclusively with particular products. Names and physical characteristics of licensed characters are protected under trademark law through the secondary meaning clause, though abilities and personality traits are not. As such, when on January 5, 1942, the Court of

Appeals overturned the lower court's verdict in *Lone Ranger, Inc., v Wallace Brothers Circus and Lee Powell*, it issued a landmark decision that preceded, but also paved the way for, interpreting secondary meanings in modern-day copyright.

The Court of Appeals sided with The Lone Ranger, Inc., by proclaiming that both the plaintiff and the defendant were in the same business, the "business of furnishing entertainment."[147] Moreover, the court acknowledged that "the specific and distinctive characteristics" of *The Lone Ranger* broadcast "have a peculiar monetary value" that entitled The Lone Ranger, Inc and its licensees protection against non-licensed uses of "the name or the character of the program which have been identified to the general public."[148] Significanlty, the court invoked children in its decision, and it recognized the tenuous relationship between the profitable personality developed for the Lone Ranger and its un-managed representation through tangible performances and artifacts.

First, the court justified the confusion the Wallace Brothers publicity would generate on the grounds that it was aimed primarily at children. "Newspaper advertisements are addressed particularly to children and stress that 'The Lone Ranger' is appearing in person. In all, the effect of the advertisement is to create the impression that the original

‘Lone Ranger’, made famous by the radio programs, is appearing with the circus - a result more easily achieved because the public interested s composed very largely of children.”[149] Thus, the ruling sidestepped whether or not the products of these two companies were sufficiently competitive as to confuse the public at large, by arguing that Wallace Brothers had used deceptive practices on children, who were less likely to distinguish between different forms of entertainment. Once again, moral concern over the exploitation of children as a market was central, though this time within a legal setting that would shape business practices.

Second, the court recognized King-Trendle’s position that the unlicensed representation of its property not only costed the company in terms of lost revenue, but also damaged the overall value of the Lone Ranger by concretizing and corporealizing his mysterious and enigmatic personality in the form of a real and ordinary person. “The inevitable effect of this infringement... is to destroy the element of mystery surrounding the character... and show him to be a very commonplace person in whom the young people have no further interest, once he has been seen.”[150] Thus, the court both called attention to some of the very same anxieties King-Trendle experienced in their development of visual materials for the Green Hornet over how to best represent personality,

while also legitimating the licensor's management practices, including its suppression of the real identities of their performers. Further along, the ruling even denied Powell's claim to being the "real" on-screen Lone Ranger, by identifying him as merely a "moving picture actor who took the part of 'The Lone Ranger.'"

Even as Powell was denied his status as the real Lone Ranger, the ruling definitively marked the property as having real value to its owners. In stating, "Powell is not 'The Lone Ranger' at all," the ruling opened up the question of who exactly was the Lone Ranger.[151] The answer, given a page earlier, was that the Lone Ranger *was* the corporate entity that produced the radio series. "There can be no question, we think, but that 'The Lone Ranger' should be considered as a trade name under which plaintiff's radio programs are broadcast, and that defendants infringed plaintiff's rights therein when they advertised Powell as the 'Original Lone Ranger.'"[152] The title belonged exclusively to The Lone Ranger, Inc. In recognizing a) the intersections of all media and merchandising bearing the Lone Ranger's name as belonging to the same "entertainment" category, and b) in delineating the synchronicity between brand and corporate identities, the court of appeals ruling paved the way for both the shift from copyright to trademark incorporation that would take effect in

the 1950s, in which certain brands like Superman became actual corporate logos rather than just exploitable properties The ruling also established the legal parameters for media conglomerations by ascribing their new integrated function in generating trans-mediated commercial intertexts.

CONCLUSION

The parallel growth of licensed brands and national radio networks in the late 1930s was mutually constitutive. NBC relied on pre-established programming to unify affiliates and attract national sponsors, while King-Trendle saw opportunities to bypass and eliminate some of the management difficulties that came from selling his product market-by-market. Yet, these early arrangements were often fraught with other unanticipated problems for licensors. The national spotlight raised concerns over audience appropriateness, racial representations, genre comparisons, brand inspirations, and ownership justifications. The failures King-Trendle encountered in trying to replicate the Lone Ranger's formula with the Green Hornet were exacerbated by the licensor's attempts to develop the latter brand on a national scale without first building the local fan networks and salesmanship records, which were preconditions that made the Lone Ranger iconic before it became

nationally sponsored. Meanwhile, the Lone Ranger's successful brand identity extended across media and merchandise and, more importantly, was marketed as separate from any of the items that bore its image brought unforeseen troubles for its licensor. Legal challenges to both King-Trendle's authorial inspiration and control over the brand forced the company to prove how and why an intangible icon should be proprietarily owned.

The success that King-Trendle had with *The Lone Ranger* property in the mid-1930s could not be duplicated in exploiting *The Green Hornet* at the end of the decade. In part, this discrepancy reflected changes in the relationships the licensor had with the national and regional broadcast networks and independent radio stations as it expanded its markets and tried to eliminate management inefficiencies by seeking a national sponsor for its property. In part, the differing popularities had to do with the overly close comparisons that King-Trendle drew between *The Lone Ranger* and *The Green Hornet*, which pointed out the shortcomings of the latter, particularly as a children's program.

Indecisions about how to sell *The Green Hornet* plagued King-Trendle. The licensor oscillated between selling the series as children's or adult fare, finally opting for a middle ground that failed to attract sponsors

for either. The licensor also went back-and-forth in its desire for a national sponsor, moving between Mutual and NBC four times within a two-year period. This would prove costly, as the stability of the radio market was essential to the licensor's cross-promotional strategies with other media and merchandising outlets. This stability failed to materialize. These indecisions over audience and network were not separate concerns, but deeply intertwined, as NBC offered greater opportunities for national exposure and single sponsorship, but also was far more scrutinizing of and concerned about the negative publicity *The Green Hornet* would attract from concerned parents and other watchdog organizations. NBC's trepidations played a part in the difficulties the series had finding a national sponsor as well as in further confusing how to sell the series to sponsors seeking particular audiences.

The shifting audience for the series also raised questions over how best to represent the Green Hornet character in publicity and giveaways. Representation had always been an anxious endeavor for King-Trendle, who relied upon premiums and expanding into more visually-centered markets in order to increase its revenue, but also faced the challenge of representing its intangible, imaginary, and idealistic radio heroes in ways that would not disappoint, demystify, or otherwise decrease the popularity

of their properties. Radio properties had been built up on the power of their personalities, conveyed largely through vocal qualities that inspired imagination in listeners. Visibly rendering these personalities risked breaking that illusion. In the case of *The Green Hornet* and its ever-changing audience appeal, this tension revolved around how to make the costumed crime-fighter appear realistic enough that the supposedly adult audience that listened to the series would not feel pandered to.

Of course, questions of representation were culturally informed. While the character of Kato, the Green Hornet's valet, merely repeated *The Lone Ranger* formula of giving the hero a racialized - and, thereby, inferior and subservient - companion, Kato's Asianness would increasingly become a problem as Japan's expansionist policies in the Far East brought the US and Japan closer to the brink of war. Efforts to first play down, and then switch, Kato's national identity entirely, from Japanese to Filipino to Korean are indicative of how representation was informed by the cultural politics of the era. Yet, the unchanging servility and diminutiveness of the character, especially as his country of origin became increasingly interchangeable, is also revealing of how cultural stereotypes of Asian inferiority were re-inscribed, even as Japan asserted its military might. This, in turn, reveals just how central racial paradigms

were to *The Green Hornet's* formula, necessitating their continuity even in the face changing national allegiances. The Japanese not only were constructed negatively as aggressive and untrustworthy, but also as "bad Asians" who refused to conform to the cultural expectations of qhite America. As such, Kato's nationality switched to that of an Asian culture that the US felt more comfortable ascribing such stereotypes to.

Finally, representation risked comparison and the accusation of imitation. The late 1930s also brought about the first real legal challenges that King-Trendle would face. Given the success of *The Lone Ranger*, it is perhaps not surprising that others would attempt to claim ownership over the character's image. These battles were largely fought over questions of inspiration, imitation, and representation, with King-Trendle both defending itself against accusations that it had stolen the Lone Ranger's characterization from actor Buck Jones and, in turn, accusing others of misleading the public by impersonating their character. In all, the legal strategies employed and the outcomes of these cases established precedent over the ownership of distinct personality types that exceeded and moved across various media and merchandising outlets. Once again, as with the selling of particular sponsors, it was the moral obligation of protecting children from the abuses of un-managed personalities that took center

stage. If representation of the Lone Ranger escaped King-Trendle's control, the argument went, it might be used to exploit children, who would be easily duped by this unauthorized imitation, confusing it with the morally upstanding personality it licensed. In turn, this might cause unfair financial injury to King-Trendle, who had worked to build goodwill for the Lone Ranger by safeguarding against and managing the more questionable and threatening aspects of its personality. Thus, these legal battles successfully established the inter-textual management and moral arbitration practices that King-Trendle had used in extending the Lone Ranger brand as the parameters for both the licensor's continued ownership and authorship over the property. With a firmer legal foot to stand on, King-Trendle would take both practices to new extremes in the postwar era to come.

Yet, these legal decisions also provided the foundation for creating trans-mediated corporate trademark brands that did not require the same type independent stewardship and guardianship that licensors had sold as part of their authorial function. As the next chapter will elaborate, the same rulings that ensconced King-Trendle's control over their brands also set in motion the conditions that would eventually lead to the company's demise and the constriction of independent producer and licensor authority

across the board.

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[1] King-Trendle had been working with NBC since 1937 to sell *Lone Ranger* transcriptions. This partnership might have helped convince the licensor that NBC offered a larger potential reach for its brands than Mutual.
[2] Susan Smulyan, Selling Radio: The Commercialization of American Broadcasting, 1920-1934 (Washington: Smithsonian University Press, 1994), 7, 96.
[3] TLS, Chas C. Hicks to Robert A. Schmid, Sales Promotion Manager, Mutual Broadcasting System, October 13, 1938.
[4] A 1942 sales packet put together by King-Trendle and NBC for the Green Hornet still recalled the Detroit Creamery's 1937 sales success, a 147 percent increase, attributing those figures to *The Green Hornet* sponsorship. The same packet also offers as evidence 8870 letters received in 1941 for a Green Hornet ring that was announced only twice on station WOR on Sunday morning at 11 AM (constructed in the brochure as a poor time slot). The pamphlet marvels that such numbers were accrued "under the handicap of unusually dismaying circumstances".
[5] TLS, Chas C. Hicks to Robert A. Schmid, Sales Promotion Manager, Mutual Broadcasting System, October 13, 1938.
[6] The Green Hornet: Modern Mystery Drama sales packet, circa 1941.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Green Hornet Detroit Creamery Case File, Circa 1937.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.
[12] TLS, Hicks to Trendle, February 3, 1939.
[13] Further Details on the Record of 'The Green Hornet'. Circa, 1940.
[14] TLS, Hicks to Majorie de Mott, Badger, Browning & Hersey Advertising Agency, September 23, 1940.
[15] Green Hornet Detroit Creamery Case File, Circa 1937.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid. Oddly, the ads repeatedly asserted that these healthful qualities were due to Golden Jersey Milk having two-thirds more cream.
[19] Green Hornet Detroit Creamery Case File, Circa 1937.
[20] Memo, F. Hull to Trendle and Meurer, October 6, 1939.

[21] TLS, Hicks to Sydney Gaynor, Assistant Commercial Manager, Don Lee Broadcasting System, August 22, 1938.
[22] Green Hornet Sales Packet, circa 1939.
[23] TLS, Campbell to Clarence Cosby, Thomas Patrick Inc., December 2, 1938.
[24] TLS, Hicks to Stanley H. Heslop, Radio Station WHEF, March 9, 1939.
[25] Articles of Incorporation of The Green Hornet, Inc. April 29, 1937.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Memo, Meurer to Miss Newland, October 25, 1939. A Lone Ranger license with a producer of cotton and rayon fabrics guaranteed King-Trendle 2 percent on articles sold to exclusive licensed manufacturers and 3 percent sold to retail distributors and non-exclusive licensees, while also stipulating that the company could not engage in any sale without first obtaining permission from King-Trendle. The contract also guaranteed King-Trendle a minimum profit of $2500.
[29] TLS, Hicks to Majorie de Mott, Badger, Browning & Hersey Advertising Agency, September 23, 1940.
[30] TLS, Hicks to A.J. Sharick, Studio Sales Contact, Universal Pictures Company, Inc. May 12, 1939.
[31] Green Hornet Sales Packet, November 1939. A syndicated comic strip was also promoted as providing tie-in opportunities for radio sponsors, though only the film serials were privileged as audience extenders.
[32] Green Hornet Sales Packet, September 1939.
[33] ibid.
[34] TLS, Hicks to Ridgway, June 23, 1938.
[35] TLS, Hicks to Frank Chizzini, Transcription Service, NBC, June 20, 1939.
[36] Ibid.
[37] The Green Hornet: Modern Mystery Drama sales packet, circa 1941.
[38] Smulyan, 37
[39] While George Trendle's archives extensively document the problems encountered in managing *The Green Hornet*, similar problems with *The Lone Ranger* are largely absent. It is a fair assumption, given King-Trendle's efforts to find national sponsors for both properties, that these difficulties were felt across the board throughout this time period (1938-1941), though perhaps more acutely with *The Green Hornet* due to its difficulties in finding steady sponsorship.

[40] TLS, Hicks to Ridgway, June 23, 1938.
[41] TLS, Gaynor to Hicks, June 30, 1938.
[42] TLS, Ridgway to Campbell, June 30,1938.
[43] TLS Hicks to Ridgway, July 12, 1938.
[44] Ibid. In particular, Hicks admits that a Green Hornet mask giveaway does not match the description of character's mask on radio, but he defends, "if we allowed such a mask to be used there would be censure not only from the standpoint of safety but from the accusation that a fell face mask borders upon suggestions of burglary". Nevertheless, Hicks assures that while such premiums might be "disappointing" to look at, they have proven "effective in creating sales".
[45] TLS, Hicks to Sydney Gaynor, Assistant Commercial Manager, Don Lee Broadcasting System, August 22, 1938.
[46] TLS Gaynor to Hicks, August 18, 1938. TLS Hicks to Gaynor, August 22, 1938
[47] TLS Hicks to Ridgeway, September 14, 1938
[48] TLS Hicks to Kiggins, January 30 1940
[49] TLS Hicks to Alexander MacDonald, Station WGY, September 20, 1939
[50] On February 8, 1939, Hicks informed Station WISN in Milwaukee that it could tentatively be granted a license to broadcast *The Green Hornet* only if acetate recordings, taken directly off of the live broadcast were acceptable. Acetate recordings were largely considered of much poorer quality than electrical transcriptions. On March 14, 1939, R.H. Bolling, an associate of Hicks, wrote to Station KOY in Phoenix, "in the event that you accept this show you then become a Mutual outlet in the eyes of Mutual". TLS Hicks to Miss P Nicoll, February 8, 1939. TLS R.H. Bolling to Fred A. Palmer, March 14, 1939. NBC's involvement in selling transcription recordings throughout the 1930s complicates the supposed hegemony of live programming during this period.
[51] See TLS Hicks to Nicoll, February 8, 1939, where Hicks warns that *The Green Hornet's* availability over Station WGN in Chicago would "cause coverage interference in Milwaukee to the detriment of the proposed Milwaukee sponsor". See also TLS Hicks to MacDonald, September 20, 1939, where he informs Station WGY of King-Trendle's policy not to license the program to radio stations with over a 50,000-watt coverage, because of their ability to "reach to far-fling territories, thereby overlapping many markets already considering THE GREEN HORNET".

[52] For details of NBC and Mutual's complaints and King-Trendle's self-serving solution, see TLS Willis B. Parsons, NBC Transcription Service to Hicks, September 14, 1939 and TLS Hicks to Chizzini, September 19, 1939.
[53] TLS Hicks to Watters, September 29, 1939
[54] TLS Frank E Chizzini to H Allen Campbell, June 1, 1939
[55] Descriptions culled from four postcards mailed August 16, 18, 19 and 21, 1939 respectively.
[56] TLS Hicks to Chizzini, June 20, 1939.
[57] Ibid
[58] Ibid.
[59] TLS King-Trendle to Ray L. McClinton, N. W. Ayer & Son, Inc. April 26, 1939.
[60] TLS Trendle to Kiggins, January 18, 1940.
[61] TLS Kiggins to Trendle, January 24, 1940.
[62] Ibid.
[63] TLS Trendle to Kiggins, January 26, 1940.
[64] Typed memo George H. Frey to ALL THE MEN, March 8, 1940.
[65] Ibid. TLS Daniel S. Tulthill, assistant managing director to Thomas Everett, Young & Rubicam, April 8, 1940.
[66] TLS Mutual Broadcasting System to Hicks, August 20, 1940.
[67] TLS Dick Ross to Allen Campbell, September 11, 1940.
[68] TLS Hicks to Ross, September 17, 1940.
[69] TLS A.J. Sharick, Universal Studios sales contact to Hicks, October 3, 1940.
[70] Contract signed December 1941 between The Green Hornet, Inc., and NBC. The contract also illustrates the large profit differences between a sustaining and a sponsored series. NBC paid The Green Hornet, Inc., $397 per week as long as the series remained sustaining. The $1500 price tag was the amount NBC was authorized to charge a sponsor, for which the network would also collect a 10 percent commission.
[71] As I argued in the first chapter, children became moral commodities that radio networks, advertising agencies, sponsors, licensors, the FCC and consumer activist groups bartered in their efforts to control content and justify a commercial model of broadcasting. NBC took its role as moral guardian particularly seriously - far more so than Mutual or CBS, which were unabashedly commercial and laissez-faire in their programming - and regularly cultivated relations with various 'choice' consumer groups

and watchdog organizations, including the PTA, in order to appear publicly-minded. By the mid 1930s, NBC had set up a division exclusively for monitoring children's programming.
[72] Typed memo, Margaret Cuthbert to Phillips Carlin, November 15, 1939.
[73] Typed memo, James R. Angell to John F. Royal, November 15, 1939.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Typed memo, Bertha Brainard to F. M. Thrower, November 22, 1939.
[76] Typed memo, Janet MacRorie to Bertha Brainard, November 24, 1939.
[77] Typed memo, I.E. Showerman to Bertha Brainard, November 27, 1939.
[78] Michele Hilmes, Hollywood and Broadcasting: From Radio to Cable (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 37, 52.
[79] Ibid, 52.
[80] Typed memo, Sydney N. Strotz to John Royal, November 29, 1939.
[81] "The Green Hornet" NBC transcription sales brochure, September 1939.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Survey result memo, July 17, 1940.
[84] "The Green Hornet" NBC transcription sales brochure, September 1939.
[85] Ibid, except for cigarettes, which are identified separately in letter to N. W. Ayer & Son, April 26, 1939.
[86] "The Green Hornet" NBC Coast-to-Coast sales brochure, November 1939.
[87] Ibid.
[88] See Bradford Wright, Comic Book Nation: The Transformation of Youth Culture in America (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univerity Press, 2001).
[89] Typed memo, Trendle to Campbell, November 21, 1939.
[90] Ibid. This type of comparative correction was not unique to the NBC example. Nearly a year later, Chas C. Hicks sent a letter to The Badger, Browning & Hersey Advertising Agency attempting to sell them on getting a prospective sponsor to license The Green Hornet. Amongst other sales strategies, which included discussing the upcoming Green Hornet movie serial sequel, Hicks described the series as paralleling 'Big Town,' starring Edward G. Robinson. Hicks' motivation was to point out that it was only the star power of Robinson that earned Big Town a higher rating, but that otherwise, The Green Hornet was a superior program (TLS Hicks to Majorie de Mott, September 23, 1940). Within four days, Hicks sent a second letter correcting his "misleading statement" that Trendle "rightfully takes serious objection to". In an over-determined effort to erase any doubt

as to what show came first and who might be copying whom, which is revealing of just how seriously Trendle took this matter, Hicks writes, "THE GREEN HORNET was originated a long time before 'Big Town' and the impression I wanted to convey was that 'Big Town' theme plots [sic] appear to follow our originations and therefore the paralleling of theme structure is quite the reverse of our show being patterned after 'Big Town'. In fact, it has been frequently noted that 'Big Town' duplicated our basic plot structure with a newspaper character fighting graft and lawbreakers... Mr. Trendle's origination of our show was his own inspiration and at the time of THE GREEN HORNET's inception there was nothing like it on the air". TLS, Hicks to de Mott, September 27, 1940.

[91] TLS Hicks to Sydney Gaynor, August 29, 1938. Hicks was responding to Gaynor's request for publicity materials about Al Hodge, the actor who played The Green Hornet on the air.

[92] Transcription of deposition by Francis Striker, Buck Jones vs. Republic Productions Inc. April 4, 1939. 80.

[93] Transcription of deposition by Harold True, Buck Jones vs. Republic Productions Inc. March 31, 1939. 9.

[94] Transcription of deposition by George W. Trendle, Buck Jones vs. Republic Productions Inc. March 31, 1939. 34.

[95] Transcription of deposition by Francis Striker, Buck Jones vs. Republic Productions Inc. April 4, 1939. 80.

[96] Transcription of deposition by Francis Striker, Buck Jones vs. Republic Productions Inc. April 4, 1939. 66.

[97] Transcription of deposition by Francis Striker, Buck Jones vs. Republic Productions Inc. April 4, 1939. 67.

[98] Transcription of deposition by Chas C. Hicks, Buck Jones vs. Republic Productions Inc. April 4, 1939. 110.

[99] Transcription of deposition by Francis Striker, Buck Jones vs. Republic Productions Inc. April 4, 1939. 75. AND Typed document by Meurer. "Matters to be covered on depositions". Circa 1939.

[100] Typed document by Meurer. "Matters to be covered on depositions". Circa 1939.

[101] Typed memo, Hicks to Trendle, exact date unknown, but sometime in June, 1939, based on the dates Ward was contracted to make these drawings and the dates on the other memos.

[102] Ibid.

[103] Typed memo, Hicks to Trendle, June 21, 1939.
[104] August 3, 1939.
[105] See attached sketches and embroidery, all circa June 1939.
[106] Typed memo, Hicks to Trendle, September 11, 1939.
[107] TLS Hicks to Trendle, June 27, 1939.
[108] Brian Locke, ""Here Comes the Judge: The Dancing Itos and the Televisual Construction of the Enemy Asian Male," in In Living Color: Race and Television in the United States, ed. Sasha Torres (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 239-253.
[109] Michele Hilmes, Radio Voices: American Broadcasting, 1922-1952 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 20-21.
[110] Ibid, 21, 79.
[111] Ibid, 79. Alexander Russo, "A Dark(ened) Figure on the Airwaves: Race, Nation, and *The Green Hornet*," in Radio Reader: Essays in the Cultural History of Radio, ed Michele Hilmes and Jason Loviglio (New York: Routledge, 2002), 257.
[112] Hilmes (1997), 21; Russo, 263-264.
[113] Russo, 264.
[114] Robert Lee, Orientals: Asian Americans in Popular Culture (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 2.
[115] Russo, 264.
[116] Ibid, 267.
[117] Ibid, 268.
[118] Ibid, 271.
[119] TLS Hicks to Gaynor, October 20, 1936.
[120] TLS Hicks to Ward, February 24, 1939
[121] TLS, Hicks to Ward, March 10, 1939.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Typed memo, Hicks to Trendle, February 16, 1939.
[125] TLS, Hicks to Trendle, June 27, 1939.
[126] Typed memo, Hicks to Trendle, August 2, 1939
[127] See "The Green Hornet" NBC transcription sales brochure, September 1939 AND "The Green Hornet" NBC Coast-to-Coast sales brochure, November 1939.
[128] Russo, 269.
[129] Typed memo, Beeuwkes to Trendle, August 25, 1944.
[130] Ibid.

[131] It is worth noting here that the vast majority of the materials used in the first chapter to construct the early marketing strategies for *The Lone Ranger* were found in Meurer's legal files, archived at The Detroit Public Library.
[132] Transcription of deposition by Chas C. Hicks. Buck Jones vs. Republic Productions Inc. April 4, 1939. Scott's objection on page 130. Williams' explanation of their inclusion on page 122.
[133] Transcription of deposition by Harold True, Buck Jones vs. Republic Productions Inc. March 31, 1939. 12.
[134] Transcription of deposition by Francis Striker, Buck Jones vs. Republic Productions Inc. April 4, 1939. 66.
[135] Transcription of deposition by Francis Striker, Buck Jones vs. Republic Productions Inc. April 4, 1939. 86.
[136] Transcription of deposition by George W. Trendle, Buck Jones vs. Republic Productions Inc. March 31, 1939. 31.
[137] Typed document by Meurer. "Matters to be covered on depositions". Circa 1939.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Transcription of deposition by Francis Striker, Buck Jones vs. Republic Productions Inc. April 4, 1939. 90.
[140] Ibid.
[141] Transcription of deposition by George W. Trendle, Buck Jones vs. Republic Productions Inc. March 31, 1939. 29-30.
[142] There is some discrepancy over whether King-Trendle's move to Universal brought about Republic's actions or resulted from them.
[143] Memorandum of agreement between Republic Productions Inc and The Lone Ranger Inc, June 29, 1940.
[144] United States Circuit Court of Appeals verdict by Judge Parker in The Lone Ranger Inc versus Wallace Brothers Circus and Lee Powell, decided January 5, 1942. 2.
[145] Due to a plot contrivance to build mystery, several different actors portrayed The Lone Ranger in the film serial, including Powell.
[146] J Thomas McCarthy, Trademarks and Unfair Competition (1984) 2nd Edition.
[147] United States Circuit Court of Appeals verdict by Judge Parker in The Lone Ranger Inc versus Wallace Brothers Circus and Lee Powell, decided January 5, 1942. 4.
[148] United States Circuit Court of Appeals verdict by Judge Parker in The

Lone Ranger Inc versus Wallace Brothers Circus and Lee Powell, decided January 5, 1942. 5.

[149] United States Circuit Court of Appeals verdict by Judge Parker in The Lone Ranger Inc versus Wallace Brothers Circus and Lee Powell, decided January 5, 1942. 2-3.

[150] United States Circuit Court of Appeals verdict by Judge Parker in The Lone Ranger Inc versus Wallace Brothers Circus and Lee Powell, decided January 5, 1942. 3.

[151] United States Circuit Court of Appeals verdict by Judge Parker in The Lone Ranger Inc versus Wallace Brothers Circus and Lee Powell, decided January 5, 1942. 7.

[152] United States Circuit Court of Appeals verdict by Judge Parker in The Lone Ranger Inc versus Wallace Brothers Circus and Lee Powell, decided January 5, 1942. 6-7.

Chapter Four: Introduction

Having expanded market-by-market, regional sponsor by regional sponsor, Safety Club by Safety Club throughout the 1930s, *The Lone Ranger* successfully landed a national sponsor, General Mills, in 1941. General Mills would employ the masked rider as its spokesperson for fifteen years (1941-1956), greatly contributing to the character's expansion in the popular imagination. Moreover, King-Trendle's successful legal defense of its ownership over the Lone Ranger brand in the late 1930s gave the licensor the security to merchandise the property to a greater extent than it had before. George Trendle bought out his longtime silent partner, John King, in 1943. By decade's end, Trendle's long term associates H. Allen Campbell and Raymond Meurer would become his new partners, forming Trendle-Campbell-Meurer, Inc., (TCM) in 1950.[1] Meurer, in particular, would become very active in promoting the Lone Ranger brand's patriotic virtues. The post-World War II era (1946-1954) was the height of the Lone Ranger's popularity among consumers and licensees alike.

By 1953, the twentieth anniversary of the radio series debut, *The Lone Ranger* was being heard over 221 radio stations on the ABC-Radio

network by an estimated audience of 12 million each week. The Lone Ranger comic strip appeared in 177 daily newspapers, including 28 foreign newspapers and 119 Sunday newspapers, including 33 foreign newspapers - by far the most for any western hero. Comic strip readership was estimated at 71 million people per week. There were three separate Lone Ranger comic books in circulation: “The Lone Ranger,” “Tonto,” and “Hi Yo Silver,” combining for over 2,000,000 copies sold each month. There were also fifteen Lone Ranger novels available in bookstores. Decca Records had recorded eight original Lone Ranger adventures. These records were listed among the top fifteen best selling children’s records of the early 1950s. In 1953, TCM had 60 active merchandise licenses in effect. While this number was down from 1942's high of 81 licenses, the licensor actually had become more selective, issuing primarily exclusive contracts that brought higher royalties. In 1950, merchandise licenses alone had brought TCM $2,500,000 in revenue. The Lone Ranger Safety Club was still going strong in the early 1950s with an estimated membership of 4,000,000 children, primarily in the Southeast, where American Bakeries sponsored the radio series in eight states. *The Lone Ranger* television series, which debuted September 15, 1949 on ABC-TV and was sponsored by General Mills in forty states,

and by American Bakeries in eight others, had an estimated 5,000,000 viewers by 1952. The radio and television series won a combined 19 "Distinguished Service" Awards over their twenty year run. Additionally, throughout the early 1950s, the Lone Ranger made multiple public appearances at various circuses, charity events, and parades. Finally, to celebrate the Lone Ranger's twentieth birthday, Michigan Senator Homer Ferguson honored the hero by entering into the Congressional record heartfelt thanks for all the public service work the brand had performed on behalf of children. The Lone Ranger's ubiquity by 1953 caused one author to comment, "The impression that had been accumulated by the twentieth anniversary of the Lone Ranger's creation might reasonably have been that the 'masked man of justice' had become, as his creators put it, 'an American institution.'"[2]

Significantly, though, the postwar era also provoked new anxieties for TCM over ownership and control of its property. As the Lone Ranger brand extended across media and merchandising outlets throughout the 1940s and early 1950s, TCM experienced a series of significant transitions to its business model that lessened the licensor's direct control over its brand. First, as media production for radio and film (and soon television) became increasingly centralized in Hollywood, TCM found its continued

location in Detroit an impediment to negotiating new media licenses. Since Trendle also owned radio station WXYZ, however, he was unwilling to relocate. Thus, the licensor began employing a Hollywood representative to seek out and negotiate deals and oversee productions on its behalf. The long-distance management that this required increased TCM's efforts to codify how the Lone Ranger formula functioned. Second, as television eventually eclipsed radio as the central advertising medium for sponsors by the early 1950s, TCM's direct involvement in Lone Ranger productions decreased significantly. The licensor still produced the radio series from its WXYZ studios in Detroit until 1955, but TCM subcontracted Jack Chertok and Apex Film Productions to produce the General Mills' sponsored television series that launched in 1949 and ran until 1956. This further drove TCM to insist on continuity between radio and television productions when it came to following the Lone Ranger formula. Finally, as *The Lone Ranger's* popularity grew, greater demands arose from sponsors and licensees for public appearances. As a radio property, TCM had been able to exercise tremendous control over the brand's image through publicity and script approval. Public appearances purposely had been kept to a minimum to maximize the character's mystery appeal. Now, however, new strategies would be

needed to promote, but also control, the Lone Ranger's public persona.

In this chapter, I argue that TCM's managerial concerns led it to embrace containment strategies that informed both their business operations and the cultural meanings the Lone Ranger character embodied during this period. These management concerns are significant precisely because it was during this period that the Lone Ranger reached the zenith of its popularity. The brand's increasing financial success and iconic status went hand-in-hand with new cultural and economic anxieties for its owners This, in turn, led TCM to employ strategies designed to maintain control over the Lone Ranger brand, which included the rigid contractual enforcement of script approval for every Lone Ranger appearance, whether on television, comic books, or in person, as well as the codification of a series of Lone Ranger rules to be followed across all sites where the brand was deployed. Overall, TCM sought to maintain continuity between the various Lone Ranger iterations in circulation.

The type of sales agent that the Lone Ranger represented in postwar America was also very different than its Depression-era incarnation. As corporate and government interests began promoting an American identity that was inherently linked with consumerism, the Lone Ranger's marketing shifted away from offsetting consumer impulses

through civic lessons to equating consumption with the American heritage. Thus, the property was not merely a sales agent for General Mills, but for Americanism in general, an Americanism expressed through and commensurate with consumption. While the Lone Ranger, as well as many other media personalities, had begun selling patriotism alongside sponsored products during WWII as part of their work with the Office of War Information (OWI), this practice reached new heights after the war. The Lone Ranger now taught children (and their parents) to trust fully in the corporate economy and to defend it against those who would question its validity or point out its shortcomings.

The Lone Ranger brand was also an important force for helping non-consuming youth (i.e., children who did not display adequately euphoric consumer values), deemed sickly, onto the right path. Difference became threatening in postwar America. While the decade of 1950s often is labeled the era of containment culture, it was riddled with unrest and tensions resulting from social demands for rigid conformity. The formulaic rigidity expressed through the Lone Ranger's "Do's and Don'ts" intersected with these anxieties over the need to contain difference. Not only did the Lone Ranger have an inalterable formula that resisted change, an intransigence justified by both its own proven twenty-

year history of economic success and its embrace of centuries-old American values rooted in capitalism, but the formula also responded to industry concerns over threats of consumer boycotts and negative publicity generated by those seeking entry into the consumers' republic.

In the postwar era, African Americans and other minorities began to be recognized as markets that had not yet been fully tapped. In an environment increasingly cognizant of the African American consumer, the Lone Ranger's long-term partnership with Tonto suddenly gained new significance. Though Tonto had existed since 1933 (though, as discussed in chapter 2, not from the very first *Lone Ranger* episode), it was only in the early 1950s that TCM began actively to stress the racial aspects of the character's friendship with the Lone Ranger through its codified rules of conduct. Though advocating tolerance, these rules often reinforced stereotypical and demeaning representations of difference that positioned Tonto specifically as subservient to the Lone Ranger, and minorities generally as outside the realm of American national identity. Contradictory strategies for managing race through the Lone Ranger formula were informed by the consumer ethos of the era, which sought to erase difference when it came to consumption, but also repeatedly re-articulated racial hierarchies in other aspects of American life. Even as

these ideas circulated within the larger cultural landscape, they also were filtered through and addressed the needs of cultural producers and sponsors to recognize minority consumers without alienating established white fan bases.

While self-serving, the equation of Americanism with consumer choice and free market expansion was also in-line with the cultural attitudes licensors like TCM possessed. Through their successful branding practices, licensors embodied the populist myth of individual accomplishment, entrepreneurship, and faith in the market-driven economy that the new consumers' republic now exalted. The Lone Ranger became a symbol for the corporate spirit that was now credited for having made America great. Still, the very exaltation of the American corporation, and its increased centralization in the postwar era, actually threatened the independence that licensors sought to maintain. As such, while publicity materials regularly called attention to the Lone Ranger's embrace of capitalism and his salesmanship on behalf of American industries, they also repeatedly stressed the heroic actions and pioneering spirit of the licensing agents that owned the brand and managed its formula.

The postwar period is significant not only for the ways licensed

brands became American cultural icons concurrently with their conflation of corporate capitalism, conformity, consumption and patriotism, but also for how licensors embraced containment strategies as a means of maintaining their authority in the midst of changing institutions of cultures of production. The paradox of the Lone Ranger's success is that it both relied upon TCM's rigid inter-textual management practices and paved the way for the independent licensor's obsolescence by the end of the 1950s.

After briefly elaborating upon the shifting social and media institutional climates during WWII and the postwar years, this chapter will explore how TCM's brand management strategies responded to the transition to Hollywood and to the emergence and growing centrality of television. I will also expand upon TCM's relationship with General Mills and illustrate how national sponsorship differed from the multiple regional partnerships TCM previously had cultivated in managing the Lone Ranger formula. I will also situate TCM's containment strategies within institutional and cultural concerns about tapping minority and youth markets, as well as in relation to the licensors own declining sense of authority.

SOCIAL CONTEXT

World War II

The US entrance into World War II in December 1941 put on hold the competing visions of consumer citizenship, between big business and big government that had dominated the Depression years. New energies were directed toward munitions manufacturing and other essential military needs. The US government also asked advertising agencies and manufacturers to help promote mobilization, war bond sales, rationing, and other public safety information through their advertising copy and sponsored radio programming. In exchange, ad agencies and their corporate clients received government manufacturing contracts, tax breaks, and public good will. Moreover, ad agencies were permitted to continue to operate commercially, whereas the work of auto and steel manufacturers was converted to war production.

In mobilizing Americans for the war effort, advertisers and government agencies concentrated on the tangible benefits society would reap from a decisive victory: a revitalized economy, gratification through consumer goods, modern creature comforts, and idyllic memories of simpler (and wealthier) times.3 As Cross argues, the answer to the rhetorical question, ”What are we fighting for?” taken up by the Office of War Information in its mobilization campaigns, “was well summarized by

one ad: 'For years we have fought for a higher standard of living, and now we are fighting to protect it against those who are jealous of our national accomplishments.'"4

Many radio personalities pitched patriotism alongside their sponsor's products during WWII. Advertisers and their clients worked closely with the OWI to "sell" the war to the American public, in turn building goodwill for themselves (and enjoying heavy tax breaks). While never as publicly as advertising agencies, many licensors attempted to stress the educational value of trade characters, now directed toward national causes, in selling the war and appropriate modes of wartime citizenship, including self-sacrifice, conservation, and delayed gratification. Like their sponsors, licensors tried to position themselves as patriots first and profiteers second and moreover, to demonstrate how their properties promoted similar virtues. "Who won social acceptance for our new-style doughboys? The USO, the Red Cross, the YMCA? No, Joe Palooka's ma," explained an article entitled "The Fighting Funnies." "And who sold the kids of America on pitching in to help war-working mothers with the housework? Little Orphan Annie, that's who. The minute Annie organized her Junior Commandos, millions of little nippers uttered hoarse cries and sprang to their brooms."[5] Trendle too took much pride in

extolling “that the Lone Ranger has become part of America is borne out by the fact that during the African campaign of World War II, the soldiers chose the expression, ‘Hi Yo Silver!’ as a battle cry. It seemed to inspire them to action in behalf of justice. It seemed to embody in three short words the whole American Heritage for which they were fighting.”[6]

As Hilmes argues, the “who we are and why we fight” campaign also opened up many sites of contradiction in US society. While the OWI argued for a united Americanism, minorities questioned why they should fight for freedoms abroad denied to them at home. The war years saw a greater degree of racial unrest than previously had been visible, with riots breaking out in cities with significant African-American and Latino populations. The black press mediated these tensions by arguing for a double victory over the Nazis abroad and racial inequality at home. Though the armed services remained segregated during World War II, the rhetoric of postwar rewards tended to overlook these racial inequalities by guaranteeing a consumerist utopia for all.[7]

The economic turnaround generated by the war, and corporate success in selling patriotism through cautious consumption and delayed gratification, erased much of the consumer distrust that had shrouded businesses during the Depression. American corporations found

themselves key players in setting the postwar consumer agenda, this time on an unprecedented level. [8] Advertising agencies, public relations firms, licensors, and other cultural intermediaries also reinvented a central place for themselves as wholesalers of democracy. They began extolling the patriotic sensibilities of their clients and the important role that the advertising industry was playing in helping big business and government work together to win the war. A *Time Magazine* article from March 22, 1943, argued that the number-one reason advertising copy had improved since the beginning of the war was that "advertisers, like other human beings, are inherently patriotic and sensible. Inevitably they saw the nation's real needs - strong morale, capacity production, patriotic sacrifice - and began to shape their advertising to fit it". The same article praises the formation of the Advertising Council, whose chief task is to "get advertisers to cooperate with the government."[9]

Others argued that the Advertising Council's greatest victory was in usurping the OWI as the central coordinating office for war promotion. In so doing, industry gained near exclusive bragging rights for their mobilization efforts, more so than even government or labor. "By a combination of brag and exclusive patriotism, the groundwork is laid for the sale of political and economic ideas. Industry is cheered and

celebrates, in its own language, its exit 'out of the dog-house.'"[10] Many articles pointed to the preparatory work done in war advertising for the anticipated postwar consumer spree, couching it in patriotic jingoism. "They have pointed up the abiding faith of people in better years ahead."[11]

Perhaps the single greatest change that occurred in how licensors marketed characters during the war years was in the characters' supposed inspirational ability to teach the American public "obedience, self-discipline and good citizenship"[12] on a national scale. In following the trend toward advertising that promoted responsible consumption and delayed gratification, Lone Ranger public service campaigns shifted away from the promotion of individualistic acts of merit in pursuit of local safety needs (characterized by the Safety Club message) toward promoting a series of sweeping "American" beliefs intended to inspire actions that went beyond self-preservation (though were still rooted in the individual, not the state). Whereas the Lone Ranger taught a certain type of citizenship during the Depression, he simply embodied American virtue during World War II. For example, in 1943, hundreds of thousands of wallet-sized cards with "The Lone Ranger's beliefs" printed on them were distributed to adolescents and young adults, many of whom were newly enlisted soldiers. Beginning with "I Believe...", the confessional tone and

first-person address of the cards were far less preachy than the Safety Club booklets:

> I BELIEVE...
> - that to have a friend, a man must be one.
> - that all men are created equal and that everyone has within himself the power to help make this a better world.
> - that God put the firewood there - but every man must gather and light it himself
> - in being prepared physically, mentally and morally to fight when necessary, for that which is right.
> - that a man should make the most of what equipment he has.
> - that 'this Government of the people, by the people, and for the people' shall live always.
> - that men should live by the rule of what is best for the greatest number.
> - that sooner or later - somewhere - somehow - we must settle with the world and make payment for what we have taken.
> - that all things change but truth and that truth alone lives on forever.
> - in my Creator, my country, my fellow man. [13]

While the Safety Clubs prescribed a concrete, if somewhat formulaic, set of actions for both sponsors and radio listeners to follow to be good citizens, the Lone Ranger's WWII beliefs seem purposely devoid of easy answers. Tellingly, they are also devoid appeals to consume Lone Ranger products. With no direct product pitch to make, the Lone Ranger was particularly well suited to embrace a vision of Americanism that seemed "genuine," while both TCM and General Mills came across as

enlightened businesses preaching responsible consumption. The brand could be used, however, to promote indirectly the corporate values of its sponsor. As such, the sweeping language repeatedly pointed toward continuity, not change, and reassured Americans that current sacrifices were not indicative of long-term disruptions, but were temporary interruptions of long held traditions that the Lone Ranger believed in. This gesture toward a brighter future that extended naturally out of an unchanging past, which would be realized once again through momentarily sacrificing individualistic pleasures for a greater cause, complimented other advertising efforts that prepared Americans for the postwar consumers' republic. These rhetorical strategies also guaranteed corporations and their emissaries, like the Lone Ranger, a leading role in determining how postwar America would define itself.[14]

The Post-War Consumers' Republic

In the postwar era, consumption was not only a reward for years of economic hardship, sacrifice and bloodshed, it was inherently patriotic. As Lizabeth Cohen argues, "Mass consumption did not only deliver wonderful things for purchase... it also dictated the most central dimensions of postwar society, including the political economy (the way

public policy and the mass consumption economy mutually reinforced each other), as well as the political culture (how political practice and American values, attitudes, and behaviors tied to mass consumption became intertwined)."[15]

In the postwar consumers' republic, economic growth and democratic freedom became synonymous. In a 1956 speech, President Eisenhower advocated the potential for "peoples' capitalism" to erase class lines. Key debates in the political arena no longer questioned the distribution of wealth and the influence of big business, but instead centered on determining which policies would bring about greater purchasing power. The Advertising Council, which formed at a 1944 Hot Springs Convention and eventually usurped the OWI as coordinator of wartime advertising, continued to push big business to adopt a "corporate idiom of public service" that transformed advertising agencies and their clients from greedy industrialists into patriotic citizens.[16] The consumers' republic that the Lone Ranger championed would be built on promoting new consumer goods as rooted in an American Heritage of free enterprise, opportunity, and conflation of citizenship and consumption. Whereas the Lone Ranger Safety Club had offset the commercial appeal of the character, redeeming corporate greed by offering a sort of side project that

showed that corporations still cared, the postwar configuration of the Lone Ranger brand made very little distinction between commercial intentions and acts of civic virtue.

The corporation became the public face of postwar society, offering liberal concessions, such as health and retirement benefits to their employees, in exchange for their unquestioning cooperation in building the postwar economy.[17] In so doing, political and social concerns and anti-consumerist efforts effectively were marginalized amidst "a proliferation of creature comforts nestled in nurturant settings of domesticity and small-town community," while corporate interests were interpreted as mere neutral agents of progress and democracy.[18] Efforts to challenge the corporate system were met with accusations of treason, as the consumers' republic became synonymous with the American Heritage and Way of Life and, during the Cold War, stood in opposition to "the material deprivations of Communism."[19] The groups that continued to be marginalized in the postwar economy felt these accusations most readily: peoples of color, labor organizers, and women. At the same time, a 1944 Supreme Court decision overturned the white-only primary laws in the South and the black vote became increasingly important to northern Democrats was matched only by a growing recognition of minority

consumers as an untapped market. Early civil rights boycott campaigns linked this consumer power to demands for economic, political, and representational change.[20]

Douglas Holt reminds us that cultural brands succeed by addressing social anxieties and supplying populist resolutions to them.[21] Russo argues that resolving fears over and appropriating the power of the yellow peril was an integral part of the Green Hornet's formula. [22] In the postwar, the Lone Ranger formula similarly asserted its racial dimensions, placing the hero's friendship with Tonto front-and-center in its efforts to address minorities as consumers and simultaneously to quell industry concerns over minorities who exercised their new consumer status by boycotting sponsored products.

The era also saw many accusations of Communist infiltration of the cultural industries, which had long been perceived as a bastion of socialist sympathizers. Mere mention of one's name in anti-Communist publications such as *Red Channels* could (and did) spell the end of one's career in entertainment.[23] Many cultural producers responded by vigorously promoting their corporate loyalties and American patriotism.

The spread of Communism abroad became equated with fears of social unrest at home. Any group perceived to question or threaten the

status quo was under suspicion. Containment culture often involved asserting a moralistic condemnation of anything that fell outside the "norm" of white, suburban, middle-class values, that stressed the virtues of conformity, the nuclear family, and consumption as inherently American. Aside from minorities, women who wished to continue working and questioned their required return to the home came under scrutiny.

As did the emergent youth-culture, whose rebelliousness inspired fear that American children were suffering from lethargy and other psychological ailments that impeded their ability to become ideal consumers. These anxieties went hand-in-hand with an increased recognition of this demographic as an important consumer-base. Containment logic also contained the seeds of its own unraveling, as the over-determined efforts to defend these norms repeatedly hinted that there were many who did not share these beliefs.[24] As such, the Lone Ranger formula often foregrounded the hero's near miraculous ability to cure sick children and transform them into "healthy" consumers. Yet, that the existence of sickly children in need of curing was built into promoting the Lone Ranger brand also revealed the failures of containment to preserve a uniform American society.

INDUSTRIAL CONTEXT

The postwar period was also one of major change within the media industries. Beginning before World War II, but reaching its height in the 1948 Paramount Decree, Hollywood film studios found themselves at the center of anti-trust scandals that eventually would force the major studios to divest themselves of film exhibition outlets. Selling off their theaters caused a ripple effect throughout the industry, as the B-films that sustained a steady exhibition schedule were no longer necessary. As B-film production declined, so too did collaborations between newspaper and radio properties and Hollywood, since these brands were exploited primarily through film serials and shorts targeting children. As the studios shifted toward producing blockbuster prestige pictures, many B-producers became independents, carving out niches for themselves in low-grade exploitation films, corporate-sponsored documentaries and public relations/ public service work, and telefilm production.[25] These changes to the established Hollywood mode of production necessitated new strategies on the part of licensors like TCM, who could no longer rely on studios like Republic or Universal to call on them. While TCM never relocated to

Hollywood, the licensor did maintain a more proactive presence there from the early 1940s onwards.

Print media also found itself at a crossroads. Newspaper readership was at its height after World War II as were comic book sales. In 1943, comic book sales were at 18 million issues monthly, with sales constituting one third of all magazine revenue, at $72 million. Comic books were particularly popular amongst soldiers and, to cater to this increasingly adult audience, comic books began to embrace more mature genres, such as crime and horror, instead of superhero adventures. The increased violence and sex in comic books was, in turn, seen as contributing to the corruption of American youth and the outbreak of juvenile delinquency. Those making accusations often misinterpreted the changing audience for comic books, continuing to define moral panics in terms of protecting children. In 1951 and 1954, Congressional hearings were conducted into the influence of violent media on children, with comic books front and center in the debates.[26] These accusations, however, were also made against the film, radio, and nascent television industries. The different regulatory responses that these industries would adopt would wreck havoc with licensor efforts to address a uniform

audience across different media. This will be taken up further in the next chapter.

After the war, radio audiences radically declined, dropping from 4.4 hours of listening per day in 1948 to 2.2 hours in 1956. This decline correlated with the increased investment by networks in television during these years. These transition years saw many of radio's most popular programs simulcast on both radio and television, while their sponsors and advertising-agencies made similar leaps. *The Lone Ranger* was never simulcast, but the radio and television series did coexist. TCM spent much of these early years trying to coordinate the Lone Ranger formula across both media (more below). While this doubling (radio and television) strategy sustained network investments by lessening risks, it eventually led to the elimination of radio programming entirely, replaced by musical formats and disk jockeys by the mid-1950s.[27] The decline of fictional radio programming further distanced TCM from exercising direct control over either the Lone Ranger or Green Hornet brands. While the licensor previously had produced the radio versions for these brands, it would sub-license television production rights to Hollywood independent telefilm producers.

The Federal Communications Commission also played an important role in determining the shape television would take. At first, the radio networks and Hollywood film studios both saw themselves taking over television. The studios had invested heavily in television operations throughout the 1940s, seeing the new medium as either an alternative theater-going experience that would compliment filmed productions or as pay-per-view home viewing alternative to going to the movie theater. The Paramount decree enabled the FCC to force the studios to sell off their established TV interests, while the FCC's 1948-1952 freeze on new station license allocations allowed the pre-established network TV operations to take shape without further interference from the studios. These decisions led to an early rift between the studios and networks, opening up spaces for independent producers to create the earliest filmed television series. The studios and networks would reconcile by the end of the 1950s, as the studios transformed their B-lots into television studios. The ABC network would be a leader in turning to the studios for product, as it was a leader in telefilm productions during the early phases of television.[28]

Created in 1943 when the FCC forced NBC to sell off its Blue network, ABC (the Blue network sold to Edward Noble) regularly lagged

behind the other networks in ratings and total station affiliates, forcing it to find alternatives to the prestigious live anthology drama model that NBC and CBS used. [29] During this early phase, ABC-TV was more inclined than the other networks to air filmed genre series that were shot in Hollywood and featured pre-sold properties. Thus, ABC would prove to be a natural site *The Lone Ranger* to debut.

GOING TO HOLLYWOOD

Michele Hilmes has identified the period between 1928-1938 as one that produced a symbiotic relationship between Hollywood studios and network radio.[30] By 1938, most prime time radio programming was being produced in Hollywood and broadcast coast-to-coast via telephone line at reduced rates. The first two chapters of this project attest to the roles licensors like King-Trendle played in intertwining these two media production sites. Although these relationships would continue throughout and after the Second World War, most especially through joint-coordinated efforts with the OWI, Hilmes suggests that the radio and motion picture industries began experiencing renewed conflict around 1938, as both took a serious and competing interest in broadcast television.[31] The renewed conflict between the radio networks and the film

studios over television were exacerbated by the 1948 Paramount decree, which forced the Hollywood majors to divest themselves of their exhibition arms. The Paramount decree was anticipated for some time prior to actually coming into being and had an impact on the entire mode of production throughout the 1940s, as did World War II. Both factors shifted the emphasis studios placed on B-film productions, which included film serials, a prime site for pre-sold brand adaptations. Amidst these changes, TCM found it increasingly necessary to have a presence in Hollywood that could monitor and negotiate Lone Ranger productions. Since the licensor was unwilling to relocate from Detroit, negotiations were either conducted long-distance or via an intermediary. In both instances, the degree of direct control TCM was able exercise over the Lone Ranger formula was diminished greatly .

Whereas increasingly more radio programming was being produced in Hollywood and fed via telephone lines across the country throughout the 1930s, King-Trendle's *Lone Rang*er continued to be written and performed from the WXYZ studios in Detroit. Trendle had negotiated motion picture serial deals with Republic and Universal Pictures for the Lone Ranger and Green Hornet brands respectively, but according to testimony he would give at the Buck Jones versus Republic

trial, these negotiations were conducted largely over the telephone, with a studio representative making the trip to Detroit to sign the actual contracts.[32] Though Fran Striker had consulted on the first Lone Ranger serial, this had involved only a two-week trip to Los Angeles. The other serials were apparently given only cursory oversight from a far.

By 1940, however, Trendle could no longer afford to wait for Hollywood to call on him, nor could he continue to trust in the film studios' careful and dutiful oversight of his properties. The Justice Department's clamping down on the studios' monopolistic practices brought with it much uncertainty, especially amongst the smaller studios that supplied serials (many of whom also shifted production strategies during World War II, producing more news reel shorts than serials), cutting into the viable production streams Trendle had previously relied on. Moreover, following all the legal troubles the Lone Ranger had encountered that partially seemed to be linked to the Republic serials, TCM decided that it needed to have a full-time advocate in Hollywood to negotiate and ensure their properties' protection. For a company based out of Detroit, Michigan, this shift required the employment of various intermediary agents to promote and monitor the ways its properties were being exploited.

The person Trendle turned to was Freddie Fralick, a talent manager located in Beverly Hills, whom he had known from back in the early days of his theater management work for the United Detroit Theaters. Fralick's initial job was to procure a film deal for the Lone Ranger, a task he was neither well trained to accomplish nor financially prudent about. As a talent manager, Fralick failed to understand the nuances between TCM getting 10 percent of a film's net profits versus its gross receipts for its license. On December 23, 1940, Fralick wrote to Trendle of an impending deal he had Ed Gross, an independent producer, for six Lone Ranger pictures that would cost $80,000 each and would be distributed over the course of a single year through a major studio.[33] More impressively, Gross had agreed to finance the films 100 percent while guaranteeing Fralick full jurisdiction over the production, cast ,and director.[34] Gross even agreed to pay TCM a $10,000 advance per picture.[35]

Trendle's concerns arose from Gross' stipulation that he would pay the licensor 10 percent of the net profits of the films. While Fralick was enthusiastic, Trendle explained that his previous deals had given him 10 percent of the gross box office receipts, which did not yet incorporate overhead deductions, such as distribution and promotional expenses.[36] Fralick went back to Gross and reported that the producer was willing to

give Trendle 10 percent of his gross returns.[37] Trendle once again explained to Fralick the difference between gross returns and gross receipts, pointing out that if 35 percent of the gross receipts were paid in distribution fees and only then was the licensor's commission factored in, the company's profits would be significantly reduced.[38] Trendle tried to temper Fralick's exuberance, letting him know that he was being "a little bit optimistic about contracts" and explaining that while he too was anxious to make a deal, it would have to be a fair one.[39]

While it is certainly arguable that Fralick's understanding of the profit margins for film productions were limited by his lack of experience in this area, it is also likely that Fralick's anxiousness to make a deal had to do with his getting paid. Fralick was not a salaried employee, but instead was promised 5 percent of whatever arrangement he might broker between TCM and a Hollywood producer.[40] As such, while Fralick's presence in Hollywood offered Trendle added insurance that the licensor would have full "jurisdiction over the product, inasmuch as I am here where the pictures are going to be made,"[41] his incentive for securing the fairest deal was tempered somewhat by the immediacy with which he wanted to reap the rewards of his efforts.

Profit margins were not Trendle's only concerns when it came to making a motion picture deal. He expressed great concern over the quality of film that would be produced for only $75,000, telling Fralick that "the Lone Ranger is such a darn big thing that I want to be doubly careful that we don't cheapen it by putting out motion pictures that are not high-grade in every respect."[42] In this manner, the licensor equated quality with the amount of money put into a film's production budget, not necessarily its content. At the same time, Trendle seemed to oscillate between his enthusiasm for a feature film or a film serial. While the latter were distinctly lesser-quality productions in terms of their budgets, the thirteen consecutive weeks that these films ran were "a lot better for the radio program than four, third-grade features, running once every three months."[43] As such, it is perhaps not surprising that when the deal with Gross fell through.

Trendle also saw a Lone Ranger feature film as a sign of prestige, a position he would come to fully embrace by 1950, despite continued difficulties in making this happen. "I am not keen on a serial, as I explained to you I thought it would lower the reputation of the Lone Ranger. None of the top Western stars continue to make serials after they make good. They go from serials to features and a drop from a feature into

serials, does not sound very sensible to me. At the same time we do have to get a picture somehow."[44] Trendle saw various licenses working interdependently to promote one another. The emphasis he placed on producing a "quality" film, whether referring to budget or length, hints at his belief that audiences viewed these texts relationally, not as separate entities, and that a poor quality film could negatively impact the radio program.

Trendle's interest in producing a Lone Ranger feature film was also likely in response to Hollywood's own renewed interest in A-list westerns. In 1938, A-list westerns comprised only 1.1 percent of studio productions, and only 6.9 percent of all westerns produced. The majority were B-films, serials, and short subject films. By 1940, the percentage of A-list westerns produced had more tripled to 3.5 percent, while the overall number of westerns had declined to the point where A-list westerns comprised 21.7 percent of all films produced in that genre.[45] While this trend would come to a halt during the Second World War and B-class westerns would continue to account for 15 percent of all Hollywood productions in the prewar period,[46] these shifts would have been felt quite acutely by licensors seeking to hitch their brands to the latest fad. Moreover, the A-list western might have appealed to Trendle as

complimenting the Lone Ranger brand's recent acquisition of a national radio sponsor in General Mills in 1941.

Trendle next turned to an independent producer with a reputation for creating "spectacular" films, David O. Selznick. Selznick was perhaps Hollywood's premiere independent producer, whose blockbuster films *Gone with the Wind* (1939) and *Rebecca* (1939) both demonstrated an eye for pre-sold properties. Moreover, Selznick was no novice when it came to adapting branded properties. He had produced two *Little Orphan Annie* films in the mid-1930s for Paramount. The film producer was also rumored to be interested in making an epic western. The Lone Ranger's established reputation and TCM's independent status made for an encouraging possible collaboration. In 1943, Trendle sent Raymond Meurer out to Hollywood to negotiate with Selznick. At first, Selznick saw the opportunity to create a star-studded motion picture extravaganza, starring Hollywood icon Gary Cooper as the Lone Ranger and giving the film his patented quality touch. However, the deal quickly fell apart when Selznick became concerned that the property had already been over-merchandised through the multitude of licensing arrangements TCM had in place. Selznick went in a different direction for his epic western, shooting *Duel in the Sun* in 1946.

Trendle would encounter this problem throughout the 1940s and early 1950s. As the Hollywood studios reinvented the western genre in the postwar years as high-budget spectacles of Americana, the Lone Ranger's commercial success actually worked against its inclusion. In 1947, 14 A-list westerns were produced. In 1956, the number had more than tripled to 46.[47] These films, however, both stressed adult themes and made claims to being more "authentic" than previous B-films by recounting the stories of real cowboy heroes.[48] The Lone Ranger brand was designed to generate merchandising licenses by appealing to children through fairly simple morality tales of good and evil and, as such, was not a particularly good fit for this new prestige western model.

Reluctantly, Trendle turned toward another uncertain site of production, television. While Trendle held out hope that these new televised films could be assembled together and transformed into motion picture features (for this reason, the initial episodes of the television series would be serialized, which was a drastic change from the radio production formula of self-contained episodic adventures), he soon ran into the emerging turf conflict between the studios and the networks that would make such an arrangement nearly impossible.[49] As Jack Chertok, president of the Apex Film Corporation and producer of *The Lone Ranger* TV

series, would explain to Trendle in 1950, “our original idea was to take an episode or episodes from the programs and add to this so as to have additional footage to round out a feature film... but now, inasmuch as no studio will allow us to use one foot of film shot specifically for television purposes, we would have to make a completely new story.”[50] With television, at least, the licensor would be working within a familiar financing terrain, having the sponsor, General Mills, pay the costs of production and promotion, just as it did on radio.

GENERAL MILLS

General Mills’ significance in extending the Lone Ranger’s reach between 1941-1956 cannot be understated. Not only did the corporation sponsor both the radio and television series, but the brand also adorned hundreds of General Mills’ premiums, advertisements, and cereal boxes. More than these tangible promotional sites, however, General Mills brought decades of experience to the table in using radio as a propaganda tool for teaching American consumers about corporate values. While King-Trendle’s successful exploitation of the Lone Ranger in the 1930s along similar pro-corporate lines made the brand appealing to General Mills, the sponsor’s deep pockets ensured that the Lone Ranger’s

philosophical perspective further would intensify. While TCM sought to appease its primary sponsor, it was also wary of the amount of control General Mills could wield over the Lone Ranger brand. As such, the management strategies the licensor employed throughout this period often were intended to promote its own role in policing the Lone Ranger formula.

In *Cerealizing America*, Scott Bruce and Bill Crawford argue that unlike some of the earlier breakfast cereal companies that had initially emerged out of religious and health crazes of the nineteenth century, General Mills was created as a corporate entity from the very beginning.[51] Originally called the Washburn Crosby Company in 1924 and renamed General Mills in 1928, the company was founded by James Ford Bell and managed by Donald Davis. Davis also had a penchant for radio, investing in a Minneapolis based radio station, WCCO, named after Washburn Crosby, in 1924.[52] Under his guidance, General Mills would become one of the pioneering radio sponsor , credited with creating the first singing commercial, for Wheaties, first sung by the company's sponsored quartet, The Wheaties Quartet, on Christmas Eve 1926.[53]

Davis believed that radio was not only a significant advertising medium, but also had an important role to play in "molding public

opinion." During the Depression, Davis would take to the air on WCCO under the fictitious guise of Si Perkins, a "common man" commentator, to rail against FDR's New Deal politics.[54] He advocated for private industry to sponsor news programming.[55] He also was one of the earliest supporters of using fictional entertainment programming with educational value, offering indirect lessons on civic virtue tied to consumerism. Programming such as *The American Family Robinson* offered the public entertaining expressions of corporate social leadership.[56]

While Davis championed radio as a promotional medium for both merchandise and politics, many of his ideas, including The Wheaties Quartet, actually were failures.[57] Samuel Chester Gale, head of the company's advertising division, however, often tweaked Davis' vision in order to make General Mills' radio efforts successful.[58] It was Gale, for instance, who suggested that the company expand the Wheaties Quartet's audience by buying time on the newly formed Columbia Broadcasting Network in 1929, rather than simply canceling the locally broadcast show.[59] Wheaties sales tripled in its first year of national advertising and quadrupled during the second.[60] General Mills followed up on the national success of the now renamed Gold Medal Fast Freight Quartet by turning to

Frank Hummert at the Blackett, Sample & Hummert Advertising Agency to create a daytime drama for them, *Betty and Bob*.

As the Depression set in, General Mills quickly adjusted its selling strategies, targeting children directly. Once again, it turned to Hummert, who had been instrumental in adapting Little Orphan Annie to radio for Ovaltine. Hummert's children's adventure series creation, Skippy, debuted on August 3, 1931. It quickly ran into problems. Black and Crawford cite the unfortunate timing of a kidnapping plot on the series that coincided with the real-life abduction of the Lindbergh baby as leading to an unprecedented number of complaints by outraged parents who accused the show of trying to profit from the Lindbergh's misfortune. In reality, however, the show regularly was under fire from NBC's Standards and Practices division for its perceived negative over-stimulation of children's emotions.[61] The show was cancelled in 1932, and replaced by *Jack Armstrong, the All-American Boy*, a year later. Jack Armstrong proved immensely popular amongst children, millions of whom wrote in regularly for premiums,[62] but the series also was readily scrutinized for its exploitative practices, such as asking children to buy Wheaties so that Jack could raise money for his mother's operation.

General Mills was not the only cereal company using radio to target children in the 1930s. The Hot Ralston account was managed by the Gardner Agency, who sent advertisers into local St. Louis schools to ask children who their favorite heroes were with the intention of fastening a radio series based on their findings. The results pointed to Tom Mix, cowboy hero of many silent film serials (and, incidentally, one of the people that Trendle was willing to admit inspired the Lone Ranger). Ralston bought the rights to use Mix's name in 1933 and the radio series debuted without him.[63] Other cereal companies soon copied Ralston's success with Mix. Bobby Benson pitched for H-O Oats, Gene Autry for Quaker, rancher turned Comanche warrior Straight Arrow for Nabisco Shredded Wheat, and even Buck Jones appeared in the radio series, *Hoof Beats*, sponsored by Grape Nuts. The combination of General Mills' marketing strategies aimed at children, increased scrutiny from the networks directed against adventure series such as Skippy and Jack Armstrong, and the cereal industry's habit of cannibalizing on one another's successes combined to lead General Mills to enter into a national sponsorship deal with TCM in 1941 for *The Lone Ranger*. Additionally, by the end of the 1930s, the Lone Ranger had proven his ability to sell "The American Way" through his Safety Clubs and other merchandising

efforts, which taught important civic and character values to children even as it mobilized them as a sales force.

The first contract signed between TCM, General Mills, and Blackett-Sample-Hummert on March 3, 1941, gave the sponsor full rights to merchandise the series in 37 US states. The American Bakeries Company, makers of Merita Bread, and their advertising agency, Tucker Wayne & Company, Inc., sponsored the radio series in eight Southeast states and continued to do so through the mid-1950s.[64] California, Washington state, and Oregon were promised to General Mills as these states became available for sponsorship.[65] TCM was bound contractually not to license the series to any other flour or breakfast cereals sponsor.[66]

The first General Mills sponsored broadcast commenced May 5, 1941. The contract stipulated that TCM would produce three live half-hour *Lone Ranger* broadcasts, Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, between 7:30-8:00 PM, as well as up to two live repeat broadcasts for stations under contract by the sponsor unable to air the show during that time slot.[67] TCM furnished all scripts and was solely responsible for the cast, sound effects, music, and all other aspects of the production except the commercial announcements and the broadcasting facilities. TCM was required, however, to supply advanced synopses of every episode to BSH

for approval.[68] In exchange, BSH agreed to pay TCM $3000 per week ($144,000/ year) for the series during the first year of the contract, and $4100 per week ($196,800/ year) during the second year, if the sponsor chose to renew.[69] While General Mills would renew its contract for five-years in 1942, it did so only after TCM agreed to defer the raise in price until May 30, 1944.[70] In May, 1947, General Mills signed a seven-year extension through May 31, 1953 at a rate of $6607.11/week ($343,569.72/year) in addition to a $20 bonus for every tenth of a Hooper's rating point *The Lone Ranger* exceeded the set standard of 12.9.[71]

During the first year of the contract, it was agreed that the series would remain on the Mutual Broadcasting System (MBS), so long as the sponsor had the right to broadcast *The Lone Ranger* on unaffiliated stations that did not conflict with MBS. This was necessary because Mutual's reach was not fully national. After the first year, BSH had the right to move the series to another network, with the exception that the series would always be heard on Trendle's own WXYZ in Detroit, regardless of that station's affiliation.[72] BSH transferred the series to the NBC Blue network one year to the day after the initial contract was signed. The series would remain on NBC Blue until 1946. Afterwards, *The*

Lone Ranger was broadcast on the ABC network.[73] ABC was also the network that first aired *The Lone Ranger* television series.

LONE RANGER TELEVISION

Though Trendle repeatedly expressed uncertainty about the viability of television, his property made the leap, as many radio properties initially did, because of the networks and sponsors vested interest in the medium. Achieving its greatest popularity on TV during what is known as "the freeze," when the allocation of television licenses temporarily was suspended by the FCC, *The Lone Ranger* TV series gained considerable cultural attention in part because there were few viewing alternatives. Yet, the series' presence on network television also placed it at odds with motion picture studio plans for the medium, complicating TCM's initial plan to spin serialized episodes of the TV series into motion picture feature releases and vice-versa.

General Mills agreed to pay $10,000 per episode toward the production costs of *The Lone Ranger* television series and an additional $2000/week to the Lone Ranger Inc.[74] Barbara Moore suggests that the average cost per telefilm episode in 1949 was $12,400.[75] The General Mills agreement put TCM in charge of money transfers to the series

producer and gave the licensor absolute and final script approval. The parties mutually agreed to let Jack Chertok at The Apex Film Corporation produce the series.

Chertok had a previous relationship with both General Mills and the NAM, having filmed the former's 1946 annual report, called *Operation '46* and directed the latter's *The Price of Freedom* (1949), a fictional film designed to promote postwar industry and warn against complacency in political life.[76] It was not uncommon for corporations to turn to Hollywood in the postwar era to create film's that would get the pro-business, pro-consumer message across through fictional entertainment.[77] Corporate entities and their public relations arms found receptive producers and studios to take on these projects, in no small part due to the gradual demise of the B-film units that had kept so many of them employed during the 1930s and early 1940s.

Like many independent producers in postwar Hollywood who had to adjust to the new economics of the industry as it faced divestiture, Chertok looked to telefilm productions as a golden opportunity to make his name and fortune.[78] Apex joined a long list of small, independent production companies that flooded the telefilm market from the mid-1940s on. In general, independent telefilm producers made their money by

shooting a series cheaply and syndicating it to locally-owned and operated stations.[79]

Chertok's profits came from the overhead he collected on each $10,000 episode he produced, with the added possibility of earning extra income by bringing episodes in under budget. Trendle's concerns over managing his property in general, and the production quality of telefilm in particular, meant that he would regularly insist upon changes and re-shoots that ate into Chertok's profits.[80] Trendle also was insistent that his representative in Hollywood, Fralick, check expenses and monitor the production process, at a salary of $200/week to be paid out of monies allotted by General Mills for the Apex productions.[81] Trendle and Chertok would butt heads on several occasions over expense irregularities.[82] Nevertheless, their arrangement would remain in place for five years, with monies made available to Apex to produce each episode rising to $16,800 by 1952.[83] Chertok also earned extra income by shooting General Mills' commercial interludes, which had been negotiated under separate contract.[84] While General Mills could advertise their products through the series, it was contractually forbidden for them to have the Lone Ranger (or any other character) directly endorse any particular product.[85] This often led to commercials in which actors Clayton Moore and Jay Silverheels

(the television Lone Ranger and Tonto respectively) appeared in costume, interacted with General Mills products like Wheaties cereal, but never directly encouraged children to buy these items. Eating Wheaties simply became part of the Lone Ranger mythos, rather than a product the brand endorsed.

The Lone Ranger television series debuted on September 15, 1949. It ran for eight seasons and 180 episodes, until September 12, 1957. Throughout most of its run, the series was scheduled on ABC from 7:30-8:00PM on Thursday evenings, often programmed against the nightly news on both CBS and NBC. By 1953, the series was broadcast on 90 stations coast-to-coast. *The Lone Ranger* was the biggest hit ABC-TV had in its early years, averaging five million viewers per week. It was the only ABC show to make it into the top 15 in 1950-51, the year Nielsen started calculating national television ratings. *The Lone Ranger* finished 7th overall with a 41.2 rating. While its ratings would decline every year after that, finishing 18th in 1951-52 and 28th in 1952-53, *The Lone Ranger* remained the only ABC series to crack Nielsen's top 30 shows. It also was the highest nationally rated western TV series during those initial years, outperforming both *Hopalong Cassidy* and *The Roy Rogers Show*.[86]

Many remember the series as appearing on multiple channels at varying points in the day, encouraging the assumption that *The Lone Ranger* was sold primarily as a first-run syndication series to local stations to fill non-prime-time hours; this is simply not the case. William Boddy identifies 1952-1956 as the Golden Era of first-run syndication. Indeed, many early radio adaptations to television (Ziv's *The Cisco Kid*, *Mr. District Attorney*, and *Boston Blackie* and Louis Snader Productions *Dick Tracy* among many others) as well as re-edited B-westerns (starring the likes of Lash Larue, Gabby Hayes, Gene Autry, and Duncan Renaldo) were sold directly to local markets or nationally syndicated during this period. *The Lone Ranger* production differed from these series because it was nationally sponsored on the ABC-TV network from the very beginning. The February 1, 1949 contract signed between TCM and General Mills did stipulate, however, that in cities yet without an ABC affiliate due to the FCC freeze, General Mills was permitted to contract with any station available in that territory. Since ABC-TV only had 18 affiliate stations during this period, General Mills likely made multiple deals with other stations. Barbara Moore has surmised that these types of fuzzy network/program affiliations were common during television's early years. "The difference between a program produced for the network and

for syndication was not always clear. Sponsors would buy a program, put it on the network, and simultaneously syndicate it to stations not interconnected."[87]

As such, *The Lone Ranger* television series may have appeared on other network stations in territories without an ABC affiliate while still remaining an ABC series. Beyond this, TCM's contract with General Mills granted the sponsor the rights to one free repeat of each episode over the course of a second year, after which all rights to the individual episodes reverted back to the licensor.[88] TCM was then free to sell these episodes to other networks without any grace period, so long as they did not appear in prime time. *The Lone Ranger* TV reruns began airing on CBS on Saturday mornings beginning June 1953 and lasting until September 1960, even as new episodes continued to air on ABC until 1957 (General Mills had bought a third repeat from TCM for the initial 26 episodes that delayed the CBS deal until 1953).

Not only did the television contract stipulate that Trendle was to have all final approvals over script, casting, and other production decisions, it also explicitly stipulated that General Mills would have "no voice in the production of the 'programs.'"[89] The inclusion of this clause points to the delicate balance of power between General Mills and TCM,

whose Lone Ranger property was its chief sales agent. As sponsorship took on national proportions and the actual productions fell out of the licensor's hands, there was increased concern over losing control over their creation to more powerful corporate forces. TCM was headquartered in Detroit, not Hollywood, meaning that the licensor could not devote the same level of attention to the TV series as it did the radio series. Moreover, Apex and General Mills had a prior working relationship while Blackett-Sample-Hummert (BSH) was a pioneering ad agency in radio production. In general, advertising agencies had exercised increasing control over radio productions from the mid 1930s onwards.[90] The combination of these factors made Trendle nervous. Thus, in a letter to Fralick, informing him of BSH's Ade Samish's upcoming visit to the Lone Ranger television set on behalf of their client, Trendle warned his west coast representative to be prudent and selective in offering up information on the production. "My main objection in talking too much to those fellows [the ad agency representatives], is that I am of the opinion they might try to take over and tell us what to do."[91]

These concerns also found expression in Trendle's humorless admonition of Apex's production manager, Harry Poppe, for taking publicity stills of Clayton Moore in Lone Ranger guise getting a piece of

cake. “It might be good General Mills publicity but it is not the type of material we wish to use for newspaper copy.”[92] A six-page puff piece prepared in 1952 that announced new episodes of the TV show also was selectively edited by Trendle to remove the opening and closing paragraphs which, arguably, attributed too much of the series’ success to its sponsor, General Mills. The excised paragraphs read:

> When we of the Lone Ranger Corporation, learned that General Mills had decided to send their masked, two-gun super-salesman riding Silver on the television airwaves, we knew that new trails would have to be blazed across the field of entertainment...
> We share with General Mills a feeling of pride in what has been accomplished. From the start, the Lone Ranger on television has been one of the world’s most popular features. General Mills has never been an organization to rest on past laurels. We of the Lone Ranger, are trying to emulate the example of the Mills. A new series of Lone Ranger films is now in production. In these, we are incorporating what we have learned from experience and further research.[93]

The remaining document glorified TCM’s oversight of the production and its concern for presenting the most “realistic” and technologically advanced series possible. Citing their obligation to loyal *Lone Ranger* radio listeners not to disappoint in the visual interpretation of the mental pictures they had formed from the radio show, TCM described its intense efforts to bring “the real thing” to the screen.[94] By the “real thing,” TCM

was referring the Lone Ranger, which the radio series and Safety Club had worked to establish as an idealized American icon, if not an actual person. The television series required that the character be visually represented in ways that the radio show simply left to the imagination. As such, there was now a need to carefully balance the imaginary image *The Lone Ranger* radio series had developed in relation to the tangible characterization on the TV screen. Both had to match up, with the TV version meeting audience expectations for their idealized hero as "realistically" as possible.

THE RADIO-TV INTER-TEXT

In their analysis of the various meanings negotiated by the character of James Bond at any given historical moment, Tony Bennett and Janet Woollacott argue for the need to read the Bond's myriad representations in films, books, publicity materials and merchandise inter-textually, or by referring to "the social organization of the relations between texts within specific conditions of reading. The figure of Bond has been produced in the constantly changing relations between a wide range of texts brought into association with one another via the functioning of Bond as the signifier which they have jointly

constructed."[95] Here, I argue that such inter-textual concerns informed licensor efforts to manage meanings behind the scene, just as much as they should inform those conducting cultural analysis of their properties.

Many early television series were adapted directly from network radio, often by simulcasting the same series over both media.[96] Simulcasting ranged across genres, from comedy-variety (*Jack Benny*) to sitcoms (*The Goldbergs*) to action-adventure series (*Tom Mix*). As discussed earlier, *The Lone Ranger* was not simulcast, though there was a distinct concern that both radio and television series follow the same formula. The simultaneous broadcast of both a radio and televised *Lone Ranger* presented Trendle with two overlapping anxieties: the relational meanings audiences might form between both texts and the visual representation of his mythic hero. As Trendle explained to Chertok in a letter critiquing an early episode of the series, "I think the directors are forgetting all about the fact that there must be some comparison made between the television Ranger and the AM [radio] Ranger and we cannot afford to ignore it."[97] Both concerns fixated on financial losses incurred by improper adherence to formula and detail, and both located their solutions in Trendle's hands-on management of these inter-textual meanings so as to ensure consistency between radio and television representations.

While the television contract TCM signed with General Mills was exclusive of the radio deal, it stipulated that *The Lone Ranger* radio program could not be cancelled for the first two years of the television contract. If General Mills entered into an arrangement for a third year of telecasts, the radio program also became non-cancelable for that third year. This requirement indicates the degree of uncertainty with which both licensor and sponsor entered into television, unwilling to lose the established profit and promotional channels they had been using for nearly two decades.[98] As Trendle would admit to Fralick, "Everybody I meet seems to think we are making a mistake by putting it in television, on the theory that people will be disappointed and the Lone Ranger will not look like what they thought he did, when they think of him as a radio character, so it becomes increasingly important that we have the right cast" (more on casting issues below).[99] Moreover, Hilmes notes that given television's limited reach during the 1948-1952 freeze years, when many communities remained without access to the major network channels (or any at all) and AT&T's coaxial cables had not yet extended to the west coast, advertisers still preferred radio's larger national reach.[100]

Having already contractually ensured his script approval, Trendle proceeded to argue repeatedly that Chertok's scripts and stories should

follow the basic plot structure of the radio program. On August 25, 1949, Trendle complained "we have sent 300 plots to California and we cannot understand why out of these 300 there cannot be 52 adapted to visual production by the insertion of visual business and visual gimmicks without complete distortion." In his zeal for continuity, Trendle had Striker review scripts so that they would "aline [sic]... as closely as possible to the radio stories" and compare plot points with both the radio scripts and Lone Ranger novels he had written.[101]

Trendle raised objections to the insertion of romantic plots into the TV episodes; the Lone Ranger's use of improper English (but also Tonto's occasional use of too proper English); depictions of murder, kidnapping, or drinking; plots that featured the Lone Ranger in disguise or in improbable situations that should logically (but because of plot contrivance did not) lead to his unmasking. Trendle insisted all these elements were contrary to the successful formula strictly adhered to on the radio.[102] "It is too bad, Jack, that your writers and directors resent suggestions for changes that we know will make the story more logical and will more generally follow the Lone Ranger pattern, which has been successful now for almost seventeen years."[103]

Trendle particularly was bothered that the television endings and commercial interludes did not follow the radio series' efforts to mythologize the character. "I cannot seem to get you fellows to take our viewpoint of the ending and I am afraid, Jack, that we are going to have to make this a 'MUST'. The ending of these stories must definitely follow the pattern of the Lone Ranger radio broadcasts."[104] The radio broadcasts usually ended with someone asking who the masked man was and another answering "Why, he is The Lone Ranger." Trendle complained that television scripts either seemed afraid to identify directly the character by name or, when they did, the voice inflection did not give this identification enough weight. "Change the voice inflection on those endings, so that they follow the radio program... the closing of the show should definitely put the Lone Ranger on a pedestal instead of just dropping him off the script."[105] Trendle also objected to transitions between the episode and the commercial, calling attention to the fictive aspects of the character and explaining that the radio series had stopped referring to the program as a "story" per se, but as an "adventure." "Whenever we use the word 'story' in our narration, we get the impression that the Lone Ranger adventure is not a real adventure."[106] Once again, slippage between exclaiming the veracity and/or idealization of the brand and the historical existence of the

Lone Ranger himself occurred regularly in the licensors discussion of the Lone Ranger formula.

It is clear that many of Trendle's objections failed to take into account visual storytelling devices that rendered unnecessary the identification of the Lone Ranger by name or the use of voice over narration to explain plot elements to viewers.[107] It is also evident that many of his complaints originated from his assumptions that the audience for the radio series would be same as the television one, and moreover, that said audience, consisting of both children and adults, would respond to the Lone Ranger's personality in the same way they did on radio - through oral cues. Trendle's justification for using proper English on the television series was that "poor English... [does] not increase the sympathy toward the character but cause[s] a lot of complaints from the parents and Parent-Teachers' Associations, and other women's clubs that feel we should try to teach the youngsters correct English, rather than otherwise."[108] While invoking the need to protect children, Trendle was equally insistent that adult audiences, who comprised 55 percent of viewers, demanded logical plots. "It is very, very phoney putting the Ranger in a cell with a mask on and saying that the only reason the man

does not want to see what he looks like is because he is in a hurry. I think every adult would snicker at that."[109]

As is evident by the tone of many of these letters, Chertok's writers and directors did not always listen to Trendle. While the licensor exercised his approval rights often, his objections regularly were met with incredulity by Chertok who, in one letter, both questioned why Trendle was objecting to a plot device - the Lone Ranger dropping his guns - that had been incorporated into previous scripts without remark and asked, somewhat facetiously, for Trendle's input on how to create jeopardy for the character, given all of the rules imposed that limited these possibilities. "You must realize that if you continue to eliminate the few methods we now have of creating jeopardy for the Lone Ranger he will soon be in no jeopardy at all."[110] Trendle's legitimate ability to demand and oversee changes were constrained severely by both his presence in Detroit, which conflicted with the swift revisions required for the telefilm production schedule (Fralick was not trusted to make script suggestions, just to keep an eye on the set), and the very different working conditions his radio writers encountered. Trendle paid his writers significantly less per radio script than the union requirements for television ($100 versus $375), making it very difficult for him to farm out television work to his radio

writing staff, out of concern that they would revolt when they found out how much less they were earning.[111] Moreover, Trendle's writers were not members of the Screen Writers Guild, making it illegal for them to be employed legitimately as television writers.[112] None of this, however, prevented Trendle from assembling a list of Lone Ranger don'ts that he used as shorthand in his efforts too get the television production to line up with the radio series.

Perhaps no issue concerned Trendle more than having the television Lone Ranger meet the imaginary expectations of radio listeners. Trendle had originally wanted Brace Beemer, the radio voice of the character and the only person legally to have made public appearances as the Lone Ranger to be the television hero.[113] General Mills rejected this idea, however, because it considered the radio series to be "the backbone of [its] radio operation... and we don't relish anything being done which could harm it in the slightest. We realize full well that the Lone Ranger radio show is a paying proposition for General Mills, whereas the television show is pretty much an experimental operation and we don't think it is good business to jeopardize a solid operation such as the radio show for an adventure into television. We feel that putting a substitute in the radio show may hurt that operation."[114]

Once Beemer was no longer an option, Trendle turned his attention to monitor how closely Clayton Moore, the actor hired as the TV Lone Ranger, sounded like his radio counterpart. Once again, Trendle's demands that both actors sound identical were informed by radio's strict concern with voice type as the key signifier of personality, ignoring the visual cues almost entirely. "I am definitely worried about our Lone Ranger. I am willing to go along with you on the thought the fellow is good looking, he wears a mask and he does his work well, but... the matter of voice is the most important of all.. I would like to have you work with Mr. Moore so that he gets that easy, slow-moving, slightly nasal, languid type of voice that Mr. Beemer uses... unless this fellow does the same thing, he will not be the Lone Ranger."[115] Beyond threats, Trendle repeatedly offered to send Chertok voice recordings of Beemer in order to help Moore to mimic his voice. Trendle's concern was that audiences would recognize the differences in voice, which would alert them to the fictional construction of the mythical hero. "His voice is beginning to pick up a little too much speed, while Mr. Beemer's is fairly slow. I want to hit a happy medium [sic] but not have the voices so far apart that it creates comment. I think you know what I mean."[116]

While Trendle complained about Moore's vocal deficiencies, he contractually bound Apex and other licensees to visibly represent the Lone Ranger, Tonto, Silver, Scout (Tonto's horse) and Dan Reid (the Lone Ranger's teen-aged nephew and the Green Hornet's great-grandfather, who began appearing regularly on the radio series in 1944 to pull in a larger child audience through the presence of a sophomore companion with whom they could identify)[117] in particular ways. Schedule B of the Lone Ranger Inc.,-Apex contract, titled "Descriptions," provided both detailed physical characteristics and habits that these characters possessed that had to be included in their television representation. The Lone Ranger's physical attributes included his height (between 6' and 6'2"), weight (190-210 lbs, no fat;, broad shoulders, and lean hips), and facial features (beyond always being masked, the Lone Ranger had to have a rather long chin, a "well-shaped, generous mouth," and be always clean shaven). His eyes were steely but also sympathetic (later contracts also would specify them as blue). His nose was straight or slightly aquiline; his hair dark and parted on one side. When the Lone Ranger walked, he was graceful, showing no "indication of being muscle-bound in spite great strength."[118] The level of detail demanded represents a tremendous change in strategy from earlier concerns the licensor had over keeping the

Lone Ranger's appearance as undefined as possible in order to meet the different imaginary expectations of the radio audience (see chapter 3) and seems largely in response to TCM losing direct control over the production.

MAKING AN APPEARANCE

By 1949, the Lone Ranger had begun making public appearances that further forced the licensor to concretize its mythical hero. While TCM previously had been reluctant to have their fictional creation appear "live," out of concern that its mysterious appeal would somehow be ruined through the character's corporealization (see previous chapter), the financial rewards of such appearances, couple with the increased importance placed on tying popular stars in with real world charity events and troop morale since WWII, made untenable the Lone Ranger's continued physical absence. Though TCM would profit handsomely through these public appearance licenses, and the character's cultural status would also grow, these live performances also brought with them increased anxiety over managing the character's representation, which took the form of detailed rules of public conduct that were written into the

contracts licensees and performers signed, as well as the furnishing of actual scripts that had to be used at all public appearances.

Beyond the early Detroit Belle-Isle appearance in 1935, which supposedly had led to children breaking through barricades just to get a glimpse of the Lone Ranger, the radio property remained non-corporeal until after General Mills began sponsoring the series.[119] The Lone Ranger made various guest appearances on other radio programs also sponsored by General Mills, given a guest-star status that further defined the character as "real," and not a performer in a mask.[120] The timing of these radio appearances also coincided with the US's entry into WWII and often included public service announcements on behalf of the OWI to stimulate sales of war bonds and other wartime initiatives. These appearances crossed over from radio to live, as the Lone Ranger made personal appearances at the Rainbow Division (a multi-racial military unit that included Native American enlistees) reactivation ceremony on July 12, 1943. He was made an honorary Indian chief. The character also appeared at the Douglas war munitions plant from July 12-15, 1943 and at the President's Ball on January 31, 1945.

In 1943, the Lone Ranger circuses began to appear in Chicago and Detroit. While King-Trendle had objected to Powell's unsanctioned circus

appearances, it also saw the profits these public performances could reap.[121] By 1944, these circus performances were so profitable that TCM sent their property all the way to Montreal, Canada, and Providence, Rhode Island to make appearances. During this three-week tour, the character was actually written out of the radio series so that Brace Beemer, the voice of the Ranger, could make public appearances.[122]

The star system in Hollywood complicated these personal appearances. Beemer was not well known outside of his Lone Ranger appearances. Clayton Moore, however, sought to build upon his fame in the TV role to establish a separate star persona. Trendle quickly put an end to such ideas. In his contract, Moore agreed never to make public appearances as the Lone Ranger unless previously sanctioned by TCM. These instances were reserved for appearances of national importance only, as befit the Lone Ranger's status.[123] Furthermore, he was not to draw attention to himself as performer, whether in or out of costume. As Trendle firmly reminded the actor, "Theoretically the Lone Ranger is a mythical character. I have told Mr. Beemer that many, many times. When Mr. Beemer is on set in costume or before the microphone playing the Lone Ranger, then we assume that he is the Lone Ranger. The minute he is

off the mike or out of costume, then he is just Brace Beemer and the mythical character, the Lone Ranger, carries on."[124]

The further away these appearances took the Lone Ranger from under the watchful eye of its licensor, the more detailed and stringent the rules of public conduct became. By the time the Lone Ranger made a two-day, four-performance appearance at the Variety Club of Greater Miami Circus to benefit crippled children in 1951, every detail of the performance was codified, including the scripts for radio announcements promoting his appearance, the act itself, and expected behavior of the actor (whether Beemer or Moore) while in costume.[125] These Lone Ranger rules included not appearing in costume or being photographed without the mask, smoking in the presence of children, drinking in costume, receiving guests in his hotel room, or making unauthorized speeches. The eleventh and final rule spelled out Trendle's reasoning: "The Lone Ranger is to be kept strictly a <u>myth</u>, handled as a business and kept on a business-like basis."[126]

Trendle seemed relatively unconcerned with addressing the historical impossibility of the Lone Ranger making a public appearance in 1950s America even though his adventures took place nearly a century earlier. These personal appearance rules, however, suggest tensions

between maintaining the property's mythical status and the potential moral fallibility of the real-life performers who appeared at these public events. Some rules, such as appearing without a mask, seem designed to preserve the character's mysteriousness by denying the "ordinariness" of the performer behind it. Others are intended to suppress "immoral" behaviors "actual people" might engage in - such as having sex or drinking alcohol - which would prove dangerous to the economic value of the property.

Even as these rules seem intent on denying the existence and lifestyles of the actual peoples that performed publicly as the Lone Ranger, other scripted elements of the performances worked to ground the Lone Ranger's mythology in the real world. For instance, at every public appearance the announcer, claiming to be reading a representative letter from a local child, would ask the Lone Ranger: "Are you a Texas Ranger, and do you belong to any other police or military organizations?" The Lone Ranger then would recite the various law-enforcement and military organizations that had deputized him or made him a life-long member, including Texas Governor Coke Stevenson's commissioning him a real Texas Ranger in 1946. The Lone Ranger would also list the number of Native American tribes that had made him either an honorary member or chief as authentic evidence of his lifelong partnership with Tonto.[127]

Often, these tensions between the continuation of the character's mythic, mysterious (but not fictional) status and the need to concretize him for the sake of public appearances were resolved through promotional strategies that presented the Lone Ranger as a living embodiment of the American heritage and, as such, both capable of being corporeal and superceding any particular tangible representation.

AMERICAN HERITAGE

The Lone Ranger's postwar personal appearances and other publicity materials were carefully orchestrated to conflate patriotism and consumption. They did so by evoking America's mythical past and situating the corporate ethos within the pioneering spirit that had helped build the nation. Even as the Lone Ranger was positioned as an advocate for consumerism's supposedly democratic nature and the freedoms afforded under corporate capitalism, the stifling control TCM attempted to exercise over its brand reveals tensions underpinning its very existence as a privately owned, yet American icon.

An integral part of the postwar performance was the Lone Ranger's recitation of the Pledge to America, a variation on the Pledge of Allegiance. Several scripted public appearances confirm the precision with

which the moment was enacted, designed to arouse as much patriotic sentiment as possible. The lights dimmed, music of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" played, an assortment of extras dressed in color guard flanked the Ranger, the music faded and there would be a brief segue into "America, The Beautiful." The Lone Ranger then recited his pledge. Afterwards, the Lone Ranger circled the stadium shaking hands with children and their parents while the announcer intermittently told the audience of all the various sites where the Lone Ranger was available, from radio to TV, novels to comic strips, and other merchandise, such as Decca Records' Lone Ranger adventure recordings. In each instance, the script was designed to insert the sponsor's name and the local affiliate or merchant where these products could be found.[128]

In 1953, The Lone Ranger celebrated its twentieth year of existence. The recently renamed Trendle-Campbell-Meurer (TCM) hired several public relations firms to generate publicity for the occasion, ranging from press releases to promotional kits targeting both the general public and the cultural production and manufacturing communities the company operated within.[129] In a document titled "Subject: Lone Ranger Anniversary Story," Trendle and his associates simultaneously positioned their hero within and outside of history. The document began:

> In January, 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt became President. In Germany, a man named Hitler was made chancellor. That month saw the beginning of the New Deal in America, and the beginning of upheaval in Europe. That was the month in which the words, 'Hi Yo Silver,' were first heard by radio listeners...The New Deal, the Fair Deal, war and peace have come and gone. Great men have risen for their hour of glory - only to be forgotten. Fiends who seemed invincible have been stomped into the dust. During the past two decades the world has changed. But the Lone Ranger still rides the airways three times every week.[130]

The Lone Ranger's popularity both reflected and transcended historical events and figures. Notably, the Lone Ranger's primary competitors in this narrative are FDR and Hitler, two people that American corporations had positioned themselves against (and not Tom Mix or Hopalong Cassidy, who were both fellow advocates for corporate notions of democracy and also intense Lone Ranger rivals for licensing and merchandising deals). The message was simple. Like corporate America, the Lone Ranger had survived the dual threats of government regulation and consumer rationing and, while those "anomalous" events passed, "forgotten" into history, the Lone Ranger's popularity remained intact. By evoking continuity between the past and the present, the Lone Ranger's rightful place in America seemed as inevitable as the American heritage of capitalism that had both produced him and for which he fought.

And yet, the document continued, while "in the minds of many, the Lone Ranger is classified as a legendary character comparable to Paul Bunyan, Rip Van Winkle and Robin Hood... contrary to what many people think, the Lone Ranger is not a character from early folklore. He is a character born of radio. He is radio's contribution to Americana."[131] To fully understand the reasons why Trendle felt the need to compare his creation with other fictional heroes with longer historical track records, but still exclaim the Lone Ranger's modern origins, it is necessary to understand how postwar corporate America sold new technologies to consumers. A central strategy was to appeal to consumers' nostalgia for simpler lives and to position new commodities as emerging naturally out of a stable and continuous past, rather than as a break with traditional modes of living.[132] As an article in *The New Republic* on the dangers of advertiser manipulations warned:

> Consider the phenomenon of the most read advertisement of the year. It is an inspirational message in full color. The voice is that of the yearning, lonesome soldier telling what kind of an America he wants when he returns. The music is strictly Nash Kelvinator, which paid for the advertisement. 'Don't Change Anything!'... The idea is definitely not related to products... 'Don't Change Anything' excludes the wonderful world of tomorrow's mechanical devices. It deals, short and simple as it is, with vital political, social, and economic factors. It commits the country to the status quo with what the economists call a base year of about

> 1928. In the face of this slogan, postwar conversion is to be without benefit of government guidance - most certainly without the cushion of publicly supported housing, social security and increasingly stable labor relations.[133]

Similarly, Trendle sought to position the Lone Ranger as sharing continuity with other great American (and Western) fictional heroes, while still stressing the character's newness and his affinity with other modern technologies and products, which potential sponsors might seek to sell. As such, the Lone Ranger's values remained "unchanged," even as he helped reconcile contemporary consumer products with traditional American ways of life, as represented through the pioneers he repeatedly defends in his various adventures. As early as 1944, *The Lone Ranger* radio series began devoting each Monday episode to a real historical event or figure for whom the Lone Ranger would ride to the rescue.[134] By the early 1950s, the imperative that the Lone Ranger's adventuring "must work and fight to promote the development of the West" and not merely to rescue individuals in need was worked into the list of "Don'ts" Trendle had prepared for Chertok.[135]

In 1951, TCM began writing letters to various corporations that traced their origins back to the Old West, requesting early histories that could be incorporated into *The Lone Ranger* adventures. As the licensor

explained, “We have been giving considerable thought toward story treatment of pioneer industries who, as a result of initiative and under our free enterprise system, were greatly responsible for the building of the Southwest in the years immediately following the Civil War... We would like to make use of such history with a series of Lone Ranger stories... as our effort toward showing Democracy in action, and the part played by industry in the building of this great territory.”[136]

In fact, “The Lone Ranger: Standards and Background” guide assembled for Chertok’s TV production and other potential Hollywood producers explicitly linked the pioneering spirit of the American West with postwar consumerist goals. “The Lone Ranger has contributed to Americana by showing as accurately as possible how hardships were overcome by the courage and determination of the pioneers... without benefit of government assistance... how these pioneers toiled and suffered to improve their nation that life might be better for their descendants... The Lone Ranger programs show that young people of America today owe much to their ancestors and to pay this debt, they must make the most of opportunities and in turn, pass on to their descendants an even greater country.”[137]

The licensor credited *The Lone Ranger's* tremendous success with its "message" of "Patriotism - Tolerance - Fairness and a Sympathetic Understanding of fellow men and their rights and privileges."[138] All noble virtues, to be certain, but as Trendle went through this list, it becomes apparent that such lessons were intended to impart versions of patriotism and fairness that served corporate visions of America. Under "Patriotism," the document explained, "The Lone Ranger is motivated by love of country - a desire to help those who are building the West... Patriotism means service to a community; voting; aiding in community projects and the development of schools and churches."[139] Love of country is equated with economic expansion, "the building of the West," while service and voting were rooted in local politics and communal living, just as they had been positioned by American corporations during the Depression. Under the lesson of "Fairness," the document stated, "The Lone Ranger advocates the American Tradition, which gives each man the right to choose his work and to profit in proportion to his effort; and to retain for himself a fair proportion of his profits. The Lone Ranger also advocates the right to possess and hold worldly goods."[140]

While clearly there is a certain amount of anti-Communist rhetoric at play here (after all, as the "Communist leanings" of the entertainment

industries came under scrutiny, it became even more important for cultural producers to declare emphatically their allegiances to God and Country), Lizabeth Cohen has argued that much of the promotion of postwar consumerism was not directly influenced or inspired by Cold War rhetoric.[141] As such, it is also remarkable how the concept of the American Heritage had been reduced entirely to the fight for property ownership and untaxed income. This rhetoric idealistically equated hard work with economic reward, ignoring the growing complaints of minorities, women, and the working class throughout the first half of the twentieth century of unfair wage distribution and prejudicial business practices. While labor and ownership had been at war with one another prior to World War II,, in this instance they were reconciled.

The overarching messages sold by the Lone Ranger during this period were that free enterprise had made America great and that the benevolent power of contemporary American corporations had direct historical linkages with the pioneering spirit that had built the country. These rhetorical statements often were accompanied by a fair amount of anxiety that the "consumerist utopia" was teetering on the edge of destruction. The Lone Ranger warned that Americans were taking the things their government was giving them, such as unemployment

compensation and social security, for granted instead of emulating the pioneering efforts of their ancestors. In a script prepared as a suggested Lone Ranger interview aimed at parents, the character explained, “the builders of America had none of the benefits and privileges of the people who are living today... Yet, those pioneers did great things... We want the young people to realize that we owe all that we have to the pioneers. We can pay our debt to those early settlers by making the most of today’s opportunity.”[142]

This script is only one of many examples of how the Lone Ranger was sold through Americanism in the postwar era. The character preached free enterprise and yet his personal appearances and interviews were scripted so meticulously to ensure that the licensor and its sponsors kept as tight a leash on their property as possible. Ironically, there was a clear contradiction between the public message the character communicated and the practices of the businesses that were responsible for the character. Moreover, though the character’s transcendence from mythic hero to contemporary icon worked to establish a seamless relationship between past and present of a stable corporate capitalism, this American Heritage also was constantly presented as under threat and in need of protection.

The 1950s have often been described as an era of containment, as the need to stop the spread of Communism abroad became equated with the need to curtail any deviation from the norm at home. The marketing of the Lone Ranger in the postwar era often attempted to contain any possible deviations from the formula the licensor had created for the property. The greater the character's popularity, the further its reach extended, the more stringent TCM's efforts to manage the Lone Ranger's meanings and movements.

That licensors like TCM would support the logics of containment makes sense from an economic vantage point. TCM believed its profits were generated through the maintenance of a stable character property that could be replicated across media and merchandising outlets without confusing consumers or diminishing their brand expectations. Its business model was conservative, focused far more intently on strategies of repetition, rather than innovation. The clearest example of this effort to conform the various texts featuring the Lone Ranger is the list of "Don'ts" prepared by TCM for Chertok and others. These set of rules mostly focused on plot consistency (for example, rule #4 states "with emphasis on logic, the Lone Ranger cannot be captured and held for any length of time") and efforts to maintain the mysteriousness of the character (the

reason for rule # 4 is given in rule #3, which states, "The Lone Ranger is never seen without his mask or disguise").[143]

Moreover, as *The Lone Ranger's* popularity grew amongst licensees and as General Mills' corporate sponsorship consolidated around the property, TCM's licensing strategies were directed toward maintaining managerial control over their property. The licensor's anxiety over losing control of its cash cow and the strategies it employed in order to hold on meshed well with the larger cultural climate of containment during this era. While I am not arguing that the Lone Ranger officially endorsed Containment culture (though the brand's overt Americanism was heavily marketed), I suggest that the work values Trendle, Campbell and Meurer embraced were commensurate with maintaining the status quo. The Lone Ranger formula was carefully monitored in order to ensure that the civic values built into the brand remained consistent. While TCM argued that such consistency ensured economic rewards, they also selectively shaped the formula's rules in ways that conformed with broader social concerns over maintaining the cultural status quo, particularly when it came down to lifestyle politics. For instance, the Lone Ranger rules often slipped into moralistic condemnations of certain lifestyle choices in which the hero does not partake such as smoking, drinking, swearing, and having sex.[144]

While the licensor justified such prohibitions in terms of the imagined child audience's innocence, the restrictions nonetheless denote a clear strategy of moral containment designed not simply to protect the brand's reputation, but also to align its representation with the "correct" American values.

In part, this was a marketing strategy designed to transform historically shifting concerns over the role of media in childhood into productive and positive attributes that sponsors and parents alike could embrace. While it would be easy to assign these moralizing rules a simple business function (attaching the wrong values to the brand would diminish its economic values as well), I argue that these values were fully ingrained within licensing agents' occupational identities. Pierre Bourdieu has argued that cultural intermediaries, or figures that exist in the interstices of producers and consumers, often share a *habitus* of lifestyles and class backgrounds that inform their actions, in opposition to the more commonly held assumption that intermediaries intuitively understand audience desires and needs. These shared values are reinforced by the cultural and monetary capital reaped through their actions.[145] According to Keith Negus, "[Bourdieu] emphasized the broader social, economic and political contexts through which aesthetic judgments are made, cultural

hierarchies established and within which artists have to struggle for position... this occurs *across* the social activities which are conventionally designated as 'production' and 'consumption.'"[146] Bourdieu's interests lie in explaining the way power and class help designate taste cultures. However, his insights can explain licensor behavior, whose embrace of the logics of free enterprise garnered them insider status and wealth. They were not about to risk such truly American rewards by challenging a system that had produced them. The rules not only safeguarded TCM's business model, but also protected the very values the licensor believed had brought them success.

The very need to include such rules, however, reveals a certain underlying anxiety over their maintainability. That TCM equated Americanism with embodying the correct moral values, and that these values were commensurate with both the economic value of the property and the status quo logics of postwar life, was evident in the ways TCM proudly promoted their efforts to prevent any negative publicity from sullying the property. "The Lone Ranger could be a vital factor in the teaching of Americanism. It was something that must be preserved, protected against cheap imitation and carefully guarded at all times.

Moreover, there must never be the slightest degree of unfavorable publicity about the program or any individual connected with it that might disillusion the millions of boys and girls who idolized the masked hero."[147]

Whereas the first sentence suggested that the Lone Ranger has an educational function - to teach Americanism - the second sentence emphasized the imminent threat both to the brand and America itself. It is unclear if it was Americanism or the Lone Ranger property that was in need of protection. Finally, the third sentence restated the containment logic by equating the threat faced by the Lone Ranger, guardian of Americanism, with any criticism lobbied against the property or those associated with it. This assertion was justified not on economic grounds, but also by the need to protect children's ideals of their hero. Negative or critical interpretations of the character were those that deviated from the status quo formula TCM adhered to, but they also were those that deviated from the conformist values the character championed. As such, the scripted response to one of the suggested interview questions for a Lone Ranger publicity announcement explicitly aimed at parents, which asked if the character was based on a particular pioneering lawman, was "no, the character is a composite of all men who stood for law and order. If

children respect the Lone Ranger, they will respect the law and the rights of other people. Also, they will respect anyone in authority."[148]

Of course, such efforts to teach conformity hint at fears of unrest and instability. A publicity stunt suggested by Pauline E. Mandigo, a public relations consultant hired by TCM to promote the Lone Ranger's 20th Anniversary, involved the establishment of a Lone Ranger college scholarship for outstanding students. Mandigo suggested that applicants should have to write an essay on the subject of "why men of the type of the Lone Ranger are especially needed in the world today."[149] While the essay topic ostensibly celebrated the Lone Ranger's virtuous character, the underlying assumption was that the values the Lone Ranger represented were in danger of dissipating.

The Lone Ranger's containment rhetoric usually focused on teaching children to trust in (rather than question) authority. Mandigo practically drooled over the possibility of using a quote from J. Edgar Hoover that called the Lone Ranger "one of the greatest forces for juvenile good in this country" as part of the 20th Anniversary publicity campaign.[150] The licensor insisted on characterizations and plots that eschewed moral complexity or ambiguity. TCM believed that the key to capturing juvenile interests lay in telling stories where "the good guy

should be all good, and the bad guy rotten to the core." TCM also argued for plots that emphasized physical rather than psychological conflict.[151]

Fears of juvenile delinquency grew in the 1950s, often accompanied by pointed accusations of a dangerous emphasis on sex and gore found in films, television and comic books. Consequently, the Lone Ranger's over-determined marketing campaign shifted into high gear. Lone Ranger interview scripts called for the character to tell young listeners to "be clean - personally - clean in sports and play and clean in your thoughts."[152] An integral part of King-Trendle's marketing and merchandising strategies from a very early point in the Lone Ranger's existence was to alleviate potential negative publicity over the bad influence powerful personalities could have over children. The postwar containment logic shifted these strategies somewhat. Children no longer needed to be protected from threats of consumer exploitation, but instead from social illnesses that took away their healthful desire to consume. Dozens of articles and press materials were produced during this period emphasizing the Lone Ranger's "miraculous" ability to cure young children of psychological afflictions. In one case, the Lone Ranger convinced a child who was healthy but afraid to stop using her crutches to walk again. In another much ballyhooed case, the Lone Ranger visited a

hospital and convinced a child to eat solid foods for the first time in three years. The masked hero also furnished the child with a set of Lone Ranger dishes, which led to the child's continued nourishment.

I am interested in the rhetorical conflation of consumer goods with curing social ills – ills defined as having a negative impact on consumption itself. According to the story, the child refused to consume until the Lone Ranger sold him on eating and gave him a piece of licensed merchandise that transformed him from sickly to healthy, non-consumer to consumer. TCM referred to the Lone Ranger's power to cure sick children "psychosomatic medicine."[153] The publicity emphasized the property's healing potential. The very acknowledgment that American youth suffered from psychological afflictions and were in need cure was a radical departure from the 1930s Safety Club rhetoric that encouraged youth to mobilize and prevent traffic accidents. While both instances suggest the need to protect children, the Safety Club depicted youth as self-reliant, active, and self-mobilizing, while the postwar Ranger cured children suffering from "imaginary" illnesses that prevented them from either participating fully in the consumers' republic or caused them to deviate from the norms imposed upon them for their own protection.

TONTO IS AN INDIAN?

Children and their parents weren't the only consumer groups the Lone Ranger brand was concerned with addressing in the postwar era. Tonto's Native American identity began to take on added significance in the brand's efforts to appeal to minority consumers. Though the emphasis TCM placed on the Lone Ranger and Tonto's friendship had progressive possibilities, the Lone Ranger formula inevitably continued to promote racial hierarchies that reinforced existing stereotypes of minority inferiority and national exclusion. These contradictions point to fissures in both the consumer republic's utopian rhetoric and within the cultural industries' targeting of minority consumers. In the first instance, consumer equality did not translate into social equality and failures to achieve the latter often fed back onto the former. In the second instance, the cultural producers' recognition of minority consumers did not necessarily yield greater understanding of minority struggles. In fact, as minorities began exercising their newfound consumer status in order to fight for other social and political reforms, whether through product boycotts or lunch counter sit-ins, the Lone Ranger formula, especially in its emphasis on the hero's friendship with Tonto, worked to dissuade any actions that might upset the status quo. The following section explores the changing function of race in

the Lone Ranger formula and some of the tensions these new articulations sought to resolve.

In the postwar era, there was a growing recognition that minorities remained a largely untapped market. Many minorities were happy for this recognition, as it was seen as an important step toward achieving equality and normalcy. Having served their country during World War II, many minorities returned home equally anxious to partake in the consumer fantasy that had been promised all Americans. The consumers' republic would embrace all.[154] As television made its debut, several early programs featured African Americans in central roles. Unfortunately, representation often went hand in hand with misrepresentation, as these early efforts largely replicated stereotypical images of African Americans as lazy, incompetent, and happily subservient to their white benefactors.[155] Lizabeth Cohen has argued that African Americans faced a paradoxical dilemma in the postwar consumer euphoria. On the one hand, the public trust in the fairness of the private market often was not justified. Discriminatory policies continued, as the private institutions responsible for meeting out the government's commitment to war veterans through the G.I. Bill often systematically denied and misdirected African American veterans. On the other hand, the new conflation of citizenship with

consumption presented African Americans (and other minorities) new opportunities to fight discrimination publicly by challenging their exclusion from public sites of consumption and leisure, culminating in the sit-in protests of the 1960s. Minority advocacy groups such as the NAACP targeted television as an important site of consumer resistance through boycotts of sponsors whose programs misrepresented the black experience. In 1950-52, the NAACP launched a fairly vocal attack against the Blatz Beer sponsored *Amos n' Andy* television program.[156]

As the previous chapter argued, racial representations figured into King-Trendle's concerns when marketing *The Green Hornet* in the late 1930s, but these primarily were designed to address the assumed stereotypical views of Asians and Japanese by white American audiences. In the postwar era, TCM responded to both the possibility of tapping into a minority audience and the anxiety of having that same audience boycott its show and sponsor with a sudden recognition of Tonto's Native American status. Though the Lone Ranger's sidekick had been around since 1933, the character was unabashedly described on radio as a "half-breed" until 1950.[157] In 1951, however, the licensor seized upon the strategy of promoting the program's pro-tolerance stance precisely because the Lone Ranger's closest companion was non-white. As such, Meurer often

recounted the story of the Lone Ranger's 1951 public appearance at the Miami Orange Bowl, where the hero crossed the color line to shake hands with African American children as well as whites. Meurer argued that the Lone Ranger stood for tolerance, but linked this tolerance to formulations of audiences and consumer groups. As Meurer explained, "the likelihood of audience segregation had completely escaped his thinking."[158]

The Lone Ranger Standards and Background packet elaborated on the economic viability of tolerance, but also revealed some of the anxieties faced by the licensor over threats of boycotts. Appropriately, the section also positioned its arguments within the discourse of Americanism so central to promoting the Lone Ranger. In a section titled "American Heritage," the brochure selectively excerpts a speech delivered by the Lone Ranger over the air in June, 1948:

> Our forefathers were men among whom uncommon valor was common virtue. Those men have handed down a great heritage which you, and others like you, must protect and preserve. It is the heritage of every American. The Right to live as free people in a land where there is true equality and opportunity.
> It is your duty to be eternally vigilant - prepared at all times to fight those who dare to challenge our way of life. And you must build. It is your duty to make this a greater nation - to build homes and farms and villages - mills, factories and great cities.

> Property is the fruit of labor. That some should be rich shows that others may become rich, and hence is encouragement to industry and enterprise. [159]

The conflation of an American heritage with corporate values (economic expansion, privatization, and property ownership) this section suggests, also have ensured equal opportunity for all.

The reprinted "American Heritage" speech provides insight into the ways that the culture industries anxiously recognized and attempted to transform minority and working-class resentment into appropriate modes of economic behavior. Even as the speech affirmed the inspirational ability of the wealthy to encourage others to follow suit, it warned, strategically quoting Abraham Lincoln, "'Let not him who is houseless pull down the house of another...But let him labor diligently and build one for himself. Thus, by example assuring that his own shall be safe from violence when built."[160]

Concern over minority uprisings were expressed in economic terms as threats of property damage, and the threat to private property was conflated with alleged dangers to the private sphere of the home. Appropriately, the solution was identified as harder work, not acts of economic sabotage like boycotts levied against those more fortunate. As

minorities bristled under the institutionalized continuation of racist practices that denied them full access to and participation in the consumers' republic, and as they embraced economic boycotts and other forms of protest and demanded citizenship rights by foregrounding their consumer identities, licensors like Trendle responded by using their properties to advocate tolerance as not only economically rewarding, but as a necessary alternative to the potential disruption of the American consumer ideal.

Promoting tolerance was not entirely motivated by economics. In the postwar era, not only was citizenship expressed through consumption, but there was a genuine utopian embrace of the consumers' republic's ability to provide equally for all groups in society. This vision had grown out of WWII mobilization efforts that attempted to counter minority dissent over fighting for freedoms abroad unavailable to them at home by promising them greater freedoms once they returned from the war. The rhetoric of "why we fight" stressed the consumer utopia just over the horizon as available to all Americans. The Lone Ranger and Tonto did their parts in selling this vision. In public appearances, Tonto would proclaim his people's preparedness to fight for a good cause, and the Lone

Ranger would explain to his companion that this was the American Way, not just the Indian way.[161]

In the postwar era, as US foreign policy shifted toward trying to contain the spread of Communism, in part by promoting the United Nations as an international overseer of democracy and human rights, public officials would often invoke the rhetoric of tolerance, comparing the squabbles of the world to those already solved between Americans and Native Americans. An October 29, 1949 episode of *The Lone Ranger* radio series featured a public service announcement by its protagonist that foregrounded the US's role in helping to bring together the nations of the world by stating "it is a problem that was solved by our forefathers who found many nations of Indians in our United States."[162] In the margins, Meurer proudly admitted that the announcement was approved because of his personal association with UN Ambassador Warren Austin.[163]

Meurer believed that in order for this international brotherhood of man to form, it was vital that the US advocate for tolerance at home. The Lone Ranger Standards and Background addressed the importance of teaching tolerance by acknowledging, for the first time in twenty years, that the Lone Ranger's Native American companion, Tonto, was also his friend. Somewhat paternalistically, the document suggested that the lesson

taught through such an admission was that "If the Lone Ranger accepts the Indian as his closest companion, it is obvious to the child listener that great men have no racial or religious prejudice."[164]

Of course, advocating the consumption of tolerance did not necessarily mean that licensors recognized the citizenship rights minorities demanded. Tellingly, in his list of "Don'ts," Trendle acknowledged the impact minority protests had on the Lone Ranger's representational strategies, while he completely failed to connect minority consumer demands with their status as American citizens. Rule #8 stated: "Because of minority groups who have complained, there should be no unfavorable characters who are unmistakably Negro, Mexican, English, Italian, Polish, etc. In short, all bad characters must be American."[165] Not only was Trendle's solution to avoid controversy at all costs by literally whitewashing the adventures of his hero, but it also categorically erased peoples of color from American history in the process, conflating Americans with whites and minorities with foreigners, perhaps deserving of tolerance, but not citizenship.

Even Tonto often fell victim to discourses of difference that reaffirmed his outsider status. As previously discussed, Trendle was particularly insistent that the Lone Ranger speak pure English in order to

teach American children the importance of proper speech. Such educational possibilities did not extend to Tonto. In letters to Chertok offering script advice in order to keep the radio and TV series consistent, Fran Striker admonished the producer for having Tonto speak too properly. In one letter, Striker told Chertok that "our Tonto generally grunts affirmation instead of saying 'yes.'" In another, he elaborated that "Tonto speaks in a stilted manner" and provides examples of the incorrect speech patterns Tonto should speak in.[166]

While Striker's comments were overtly racist, it is also important to situate them within particular institutionalized norms of differentiation. Radio imposed linguistic markers of difference so that audiences could recognize the different racial identities of the voices they heard. As Hilmes has argued, such practices were rooted in underlying fears of race mixing, and the inability to distinguish voices often forcibly inscribed racial stereotypes into speech patterns, so that African American characters always spoke in minstrel voices.[167] By the early 1950s, these practices had become so codified that Striker's insistence seems equally motivated by his concern that audiences would be confused if Tonto spoke differently.

In the postwar era, tolerance did not mean eliminating difference, nor was difference presented on equal footing. In advocating tolerance as

economically valuable, essentializing difference provided for import rationales. Embracing minorities as equal participants in the consumers' republic could allow for an expansion of consumer resources, as could equal division of labor to be garnered through transforming previously negative stereotypes into positive resources. In *The Green Hornet*, the hero's "oriental" valet, Kato was not merely Britt Reid's obedient servant, but also a brilliant scientific mind who designed all of the Hornet's contraptions. His dangerous inscrutability was domesticated and put to positive use. The Lone Ranger's friend and partner, Tonto, also served an important function in permitting the white hero to succeed in his work. Tonto's usefulness, derived from stereotypes of Native American savagery and loyalty, actually allowed the Lone Ranger to remain morally righteous, even as he violently engaged unscrupulous criminals.

As the description of Tonto's habits included in the 1952 television production contract signed by Apex Productions and The Lone Ranger inc., clearly stipulated, when killing was absolutely necessary to the plot, this was Tonto's job. Equally as important, the contract was quick to add, "and then somewhat secretly and without the Lone Ranger's permission."[168] Tonto's characterization effectively allowed the Lone Ranger's licensors to negotiate the property's contradictory position as a

popular commodity sold primarily to children and also a morally upright advocate of citizenship that appeased parental concerns over the commercialization of children's culture. Tonto allowed the Lone Ranger to have both commercial value and moral values, and therefore served an important role in configuring the consumer/citizen nexus that characterized the postwar era, though one that excluded him (and other minorities) from achieving a similar and equal conflation of identities. Appropriately, though Trendle preached tolerance by emphasizing the friendship between the Lone Ranger and Tonto, this was not a friendship among equals. As the habits clause in the contract made clear, "When The Lone Ranger removes his mask for any purpose, [Tonto] makes a point of looking the other way."[169] The consumers' republic might have promised opportunity for all, but this was premised on whites tolerating the economically useful (but otherwise ethically dubious) qualities minorities possessed. Minorities, in turn, showed the necessary deference to an American Heritage that they were apparently not fully a part of, but whose fairness and tolerance would eventually yield rewards, as long as they did not challenge its authority.

RISE OF THE CORPORATION - DECLINE OF THE LICENSOR?

While TCM certainly did its part to promote the consumers' republic, including embracing some its more repressive aspects, licensors also faced anxieties over their own changing position as authority figures, both within the culture industries and society at large. Changes in the workplace began altering the populist interpretations of free enterprise that had informed licensor attitudes and beliefs. The growth of the corporate ethos in the postwar era conflicted with TCM's vision of itself as an independent enterprise existing at the interstices of multiple cultural producers and managing the terrain between them that their properties occupied. Paradoxically, as the Lone Ranger reached the zenith of both its popularity and profits, TCM's sense of control and authority were dwindling. Even as it worked toward making the Lone Ranger into the ultimate organization man, they struggled to affirm their own heroic status within white-collar America.

The cultural industries in the late 1940s and early 1950s were largely composed of white men, particularly at the managerial levels, and while licensors like TCM might have felt some anxiety over the increased demands of minorities, there was very little direct threat to the authority licensors carried as members of the managerial-owner class. This is not to say, however, that licensors did not feel their status and identities to be in

flux in the postwar era. The postwar years were boom years in terms of profits for many licensors, and in many instances their properties required very little salesmanship on licensors' parts to find new merchandising opportunities and to secure corporate sponsorship. Yet, this economic success was accompanied by changes in the cultural valuation of the independent professional in the workplace, expressed in new ideals and concerns for American manhood. As Michael Kimmel argues, "modern corporate capitalism had transformed a nation of entrepreneurs - Self-Made Men - into a nation of hired employees."[170]

Independent licensors had prided themselves for nearly twenty years on their insider/outsider status, able to amass great fortunes by working between cultural industries and offering their managerial skills and cultural intermediary status - their understanding of how to talk to actual consumers - to multiple corporate sponsors, all the while working exclusively for their own economic self-interest. While their characters might have enforced corporate ideals, licensors saw themselves as descendants of the heroic artisan, a new class of "independent professionals" who supported corporate goals, but did not work for them. It is perhaps not surprising then that even as the Lone Ranger became a loyal company man, selling the new corporate family and endorsing the

easy postwar slippage between consumption and civic participation, licensors bristled somewhat over playing similarly conformist roles. While TCM may no longer have had to sell the values (both economic and cultural) of the Lone Ranger to corporate sponsors as rigorously as it had during the Depression, the licensors did feel an acute need to sell their own heroic virtues, in ways that simultaneously stressed their entrepreneurialism but also their contiguous role within corporate America. They advocated for a return to the status quo that had allowed them to serve corporate interests without relinquishing their independent authority.

Significantly, the 1952 Lone Ranger Twentieth Anniversary Story promotional packet prepared by Trendle-Campbell-Meurer, Inc., seems far more eager to celebrate the roles that Trendle, his partner and salesman H. Allen Campbell, and his partner/lawyer, Raymond Meurer, played in making the Lone Ranger a star than in discussing the sales appeal of their property. Trendle repeatedly was referred to as "truly a twentieth century pioneer" in radio broadcasting, film distribution and exhibition, and for his creation of the Lone Ranger.[171] Campbell's work of selling *The Lone Ranger* to potential sponsors is described in practically mythic terms that conflate salesmanship with more traditionally vaunted heroic endeavors.

"Mr. Campbell accepted the challenge... unabashed by the countless difficulties... He could have rested on these laurels but he didn't... Allen Campbell went on from there, like the Lone Ranger himself, he was not one to rest on past performances."[172] The comparison of Campbell to the Lone Ranger allowed the latter to be situated within corporate ideals while permitting the former to assert a kind of heroic independence that is at once compatible with yet removed from corporate life.

Meurer's role in elevating the Lone Ranger to the status of American icon was given even more weight; the document implied that American values were synonymous with the protection of property values. Meurer was identified as the team member who saw the greatest potential for the Lone Ranger to teach Americanism, but also the one most concerned with the safeguarding the property's virtuousness. In order to protect the American values the Lone Ranger embodied, Meurer was described as tirelessly traveling to every part of the country to "put down imposters, block infringements and guard against misrepresentation in publicity or advertising."[173]

Meurer's litigation powers were championed. While no direct comparison to the Lone Ranger was made, the language used in describing his exploits might easily be used in describing the hard-riding Western

hero who traversed the West putting down injustice. Corporate values were galvanized, Meurer was shown as possessing those qualities, and like Campbell, was positioned somewhat outside the conformist corporate culture he nobly defended (much as the Western hero himself was never a member of the civilization he helps develop).

In the end, TCM's efforts at asserting the vitality of its independent position were for naught. By the end of the 1950s, many of the branding strategies and licensing practices they had helped shepherd were beginning to be handled in house by the networks and film studios. ABC launched its character licensing division in 1957 to merchandise *Maverick* toys and clothing.[174] The degree to which ABC's actions were motivated by the success TCM had with *The Lone Ranger* television series remains unclear, but there was doubtless a ripple of inspiration. The validation of consumerism as now patriotic and healthy for children lessened the perceived need for independent licensors to act as intermediaries between the public and the corporations.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, TCM sold its rights to the Lone Ranger property to the Wrather Corporation in 1953, for $3,000,000.[175] Wrather was a Hollywood-based licensing agency that, to some extent, was even more independent than TCM, in that it had absolutely no involvement in

the production of materials based on the properties it purchased (whereas TCM continued to produce *The Lone Ranger* radio series until 1954), but to a greater extent, was far more of an industry insider than TCM ever desired to be.[176] To be certain, other factors beyond a sense of dwindling authority motivated TCM to sell. Despite the continued popularity of the Lone Ranger brand, by 1952 TCM noticed a sharp decline in its revenues from production licenses. While the Lone Ranger still generated royalties from merchandising, the phasing out of network radio programming, the transition of the B-lots into television production facilities, and the difficulties in making a feature film deal all led to a downturn in profits. TCM saw the height of its property's popularity as also its summit.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have argued that containment, both on the business and cultural fronts, were central to TCM's postwar licensing strategies. Even as the Lone Ranger entered into its most popular and profitable years, TCM's anxieties over controlling and maintaining the success of its property grew exponentially. Paradoxically, while the centralization of media industries in Hollywood provided increased opportunities for cross-merchandising licensed brands, it also further

loosened the degree of direct management TCM could exercise over the Lone Ranger. This, in turn, led the licensor to develop detailed and meticulous "rules" of conduct that licensees and producers were directed to follow at all costs. These rules were especially designed to address *The Lone Ranger* television production. Regularly broken, the rules' very existence suggested the difficulties in managing properties long distance and exposed the cultural assumptions that informed TCM's understanding of the Lone Ranger's appeal and market value.

Television not only complicated the cross-merchandising strategies King-Trendle had been using since the mid 1930s, it also brought with it a different set of representational and inter-textual concerns. TCM's insistence on conformity between radio and television indicates both an awareness and strategic employment of inter-textual meanings across texts long before conglomeration. Concerns over formulaic inconsistencies also point to TCM's increasing anxieties over maintaining control over its property, as production and promotion fell further outside its direct oversight.

Meanwhile, the cultural climate in postwar America necessitated a shift in sales strategies. Whereas King-Trendle had worked during the Depression years to position their property as a moral arbiter with an

ability to teach children good character values, the postwar period saw a transformation in the relationship between consumption and citizenship that no longer placed these identities in conflict with one another. The licensor continued to promote the character's unique appeal to children, but rather than stressing the Lone Ranger's character-building qualities, TCM now bestowed an almost messianic power on its brand. Often, such rhetorical exaltation went hand-in-hand with overtly selling the power of the Lone Ranger's personality through consumer products that could raise the healthful spirit of American youth. At the same time, it pointed to an underlying concern that postwar youth were sickly and in need of reinvigoration. TCM stressed the Lone Ranger's power to reverse these trends through the character's inspirational heroics and embrace of the American pioneering heritage. In fact, TCM incorporated the American Heritage rhetoric into almost every sales pitch and promotional press release prepared for the Lone Ranger.

The American Heritage of free enterprise was used as a means of offsetting growing minority audience demands for improved representation through boycott threats. TCM's newfound emphasis on tolerance was motivated by desires to reach minority consumers and to deflect negative publicity from its representational politics. The rhetoric of

tolerance was wholly commensurate with advocating consumer equality while continuing to maintain existing racial hierarchies and stereotypes. Promotional materials show a growing incongruity in the postwar era between the economic rewards TCM reaped and the mobility and managerial constraints they experienced. As their fortunes soared, their relative autonomy and authority, as agents who moved between difference cultural sites of production, diminished.

The accumulation of these containment anxieties, coupled with the changing cultural production landscape, led TCM to sell off its most profitable property. The timing of the sale was fortuitous as the very conditions within the media industries that had led to the series' enormous popularity were already changing. Trendle's struggles to duplicate the television success of *The Lone Ranger* with *The Green Hornet*, in part the result of these changes in production, in part due to Trendle's unwillingness to adapt his licensing practices to meet these changes, will be discussed in the next chapter.

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[1] For the sake of clarity, I will refer to the licensor as King-Trendle when discussing its operations in the context of the 1930s, but will employ the TCM moniker for its WWII and postwar activities. While TCM only officially came into existence in 1950, all three of its partners were

involved in the daily licensing and production operation for the Lone Ranger throughout the 1940s.

[2] The History of The Lone Ranger, Chapter 2, page 5. Unpublished manuscript. Circa 1954.

[3] TJ Jackson Lears, Fables of abundance : a cultural history of advertising in America. New York: Basic Books, 1994. 246.

[4] Cross, Gary. An all-consuming century : why commercialism won in modern America (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 84.

[5] Clarke J. Mattimore and Hannibal Coons, "The Fighting Funnies,"in Colliers (1944), 24, 44-45.

[6] The Lone Ranger Standards and Background. Circa 1953.

[7] For a discussion of radio and race politics during World War II, see Michele Hilmes, Radio Voices: American Broadcasting, 1922-1952 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 230-270

[8] Lears, 246.

[9] Time March 22, 1943

[10] Madison Avenue, "Advertising in Wartime,"in The New Republic (February 21, 1944).

[11] Time March 22, 1943

[12] The Lone Ranger Standards and Background. Circa 1953.

[13] Lone Ranger "I Believe..." wallet-sized card, 1943.

[14] It is difficult to identify whose influence is greater in pushing the Lone Ranger property more in this general direction. King-Trendle had established policies long before General Mills entered the picture of downplaying direct salesmanship in order to avoid complaints from parents and advocacy groups and in order to prevent the property from become overly-associated with any particular sponsor. It had also previously devised marketing campaigns that used civic institutions and taught 'good' character values as means of legitimating/downplaying the sales function of the property. General Mills was an industry leader in embracing soft-sell anti-New Deal rhetoric during the Depression that used entertainment programming to promote alternative visions of American identity fully commensurate with consumerism.

[15] Lizbeth Cohen, A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2003), 7.

[16] Lears, 248.

[17] For a discussion of corporate citizenship, see Cohen, 114-124.

[18] Lears, 249

[19] Cohen, 8
[20] For a discussion of the relationship between consumer boycotts and African American civil rights struggles, see Cohen, 166-188.
[21] Douglas B. Holt, How Brands Become Icons: The Principles of Cultural Branding (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2004), 8.
[22] Alexander Russo, "A Dark(ened) Figure on the Airwaves: Race, Nation and *The Green Hornet*,"in Radio Reader: Essays in the Cultural History of Radio, ed. Michele Hilmes and Jason Loviglio (New York: Routledge, 2002), 265.
[23] For a discussion of television and blacklisting see George Lipsitz, "The Meaning of Memory: Family, Class, and Ethnicity in Early Network Television," in Private Screenings: Television and the Female Consumer, ed. Lynn Spigel and Denise Mann (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 92-93.
[24] For a discussion of the heterogeneity of postwar society versus the illusion of conformity, see Alan Brinkley, "The Illusion of Unity in Cold War Culture,"in Rethinking Cold War Culture, ed. Kuznick and Gilbert (Washington: Smithsonian, 2001), 62-71.
[25] Tom Schatz, History of the American Cinema: Boom and Bust, 1940-1949 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1997), 329-352; Christopher Anderson, "Television and Hollywood in the 1940s," in History of the American Cinema: Boom and Bust, 1940-1949, ed. Tom Schatz (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1997), 422-444.
[26] Bradford Wright, Comic Book Nation: The Transformation of Youth Culture in America (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 86-108.
[27] Michele Hilmes, Hollywood and Broadcasting: From Radio to Cable (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 146-147.
[28] Anderson (1997), 422-444; Christopher Anderson, Hollywood TV: The Studio System in the Fifties (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994), 1-21.
[29] Tino Balio, "Introduction to Part I," in Hollywood in the Age of Television, ed. Tino Balio (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 20.
[30] Hilmes, (1990), 49-77.
[31] Ibid, 73-74.
[32] Transcription of deposition by George W. Trendle, Buck Jones vs. Republic
Productions Inc. March 31, 1939. 57-58.

[33] TLS Fralick to Trendle, December 23, 1940.
[34] TLS Fralick to Trendle, December 27, 1940.
[35] TLS Gross to Fralick, January 8, 1941.
[36] TLS Trendle to Fralick, January 13, 1941.
[37] Telegram Fralick to Trendle, received January 16, 1941.
[38] TLS Trendle to Fralick, January 17, 1941.
[39] TLS Trendle to Fralick, January 13, 1941 and January 17, 1941.
[40] TLS Trendle to Fralick, December 30, 1940. Fralick was constantly trying to up this commission to 10%. For example, see TLS Fralick to Trendle, January 10, 1941.
[41] TLS Fralick to Trendle, January 8, 1941.
[42] TLS Trendle to Fralick, December 30, 1940 and January 17, 1941.
[43] TLS, Trendle to Fralick, January 17, 1941.
[44] TLS Trendle to Chertok, September 7, 1950. This letter is written to the producer of *The Lone Ranger* television series, who was also trying to negotiate a motion picture distribution deal with Republic Pictures based on the telefilm materials shot.
[45] Richard Slotkin, Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth Century America (New York: Athenium, 1992), 278.
[46] Schatz, 108.
[47] Slotkin, 347.
[48] Schatz, 226-227.
[49] The original 1949 General Mills - Show Productions - Lone Ranger, Inc television contract gave TCM the right to make two or more motion pictures out of the television series so long as there was no additional expense for General Mills. February 1, 1949, clause 7.
[50] TLS Chertok to Trendle, June 23, 1950.
[51] Scott Bruce and Bill Crawford, Cerealizing America: The Unsweetened Story of American Breakfast Cereal (Boston: Saber and Faber, 1995), 77.
[52] Ibid. 76.
[53] Ibid. 77-78.
[54] Typed memo, NBC Interdepartmental Correspondence, Niles Trammell to G. F. McLelland, describing a meeting with Davis in which he pitched a similar program idea to NBC. April 13, 1933. See also William L. Bird, Jr., Better Living: Advertising, Media, and the New Vocabulary of Business Leadership, 1935-1955 (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1999), 52-53.

[55] NBC refused this request, but Davis would strike a similar deal with CBS. Bird, 52.
[56] *American Family Robinson* was actually sponsored by the National Association of Manufacturers, but was the creation of Harry A. Bullis, General Mills' Vice President and also chairman of the NAM's Public Relations Committee. Bird, 54.
[57] During the height of the Network era, Davis was also one of the loudest advocates for buying simultaneous time for the same program on both NBC and CBS in order to corner the market. Not surprisingly, NBC and CBS were less enthusiastic about the idea. See Typed NBC internal memo titled 'Dinner with D D David - General Mills,' July 7, 1933. See also Bird, 52.
[58] Gale would later take credit for creating the company's fictional national spokeswoman, Betty Crocker.
[59] There are contradictory accounts here. According to Black and Crawford, the series was placed on CBS. According to Bird, the entire radio station became a CBS affiliate in 1929. Bird, 51.
[60] Black and Crawford, 78
[61] Ibid. 79. See also Federal Trade Commission Stipulation no. 01415: False and Misleading Advertising. July 30, 1936.
[62] General Mills created a publicity blitz when Shirley Temple wrote in requesting one such giveaway in 1939. According to Black and Crawford, "General Mills turned the starlet's innocent request into a major marketing coup, reproducing the letter again and again in press releases, articles, and company histories down through the decades." 86.
[63] Mix apparently had a high pitched voice with a thick Oklahoma drawl that was deemed unsuitable for radio. By 1932, his career was also in a down spin, due in no small part to the advent of talking pictures, and the actor was broke and willing to accept Ralston's offer of a steady pay cheque in exchange for his image on promotional materials and his silence over the air. The series lasted 17 years (1933-1950). Mix died in a car crash in 1940. Black and Crawford, 80-82.
[64] American Bakeries sponsored the Lone Ranger series in Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia and Tennessee.
[65] Signed contract, March 3, 1941, clause 7.
[66] Washington State, Oregon, and California were eventually added to the General Mills sponsorship on June 24, 1946 at a combined added cost of

$750/week for the first 26-weeks, with incremental increases of $250/week for each subsequent 26-week period.

[67] BSH could also cancel the contract after any 13-week interval with 30-days notice. Signed contract, March 3, 1941, clauses 4, 5, 8, 9, and 13

[68] Signed contract, March 3, 1941, clauses 3 and 20

[69] Signed contract, March 3, 1941, clauses 11 and 12. These figures included production costs and licensing fees.

[70] Signed contract, February 16, 1942

[71] Signed contract, May 16, 1947, clauses 7, 8, 10b and 12

[72] Signed contract, March 3, 1941, clauses 18 and 19

[73] Lone Ranger chronology compiled circa May 15, 1953 in preparation for 20th Anniversary PR blitz

[74] In the Southeast, The Lone Ranger television series would appear on ABC affiliates sponsored by Merita Bakeries. The Southeastern sponsor worked out an arrangement with General Mills to pay a royalty for the right to use the show, although the exact dollar figure is unknown. It is also unknown if or how much they paid TCM for the license. See TLS Trendle to Chertok, July 11, 1949 and TLS Trendle to Chertok, July 12, 1949.

[75] Barbara Moore, "The Cisco Kid and Friends: The Syndication of Television Series from 1948-1952," in Journal of Popular Film and Television 8:1 (Spring 1980), 28.

[76] Bird, 178-181.

[77] Bird, 178-179.

[78] Actually, Chertok was fairly well established in Hollywood circles, having won an Academy Award in 1945 for *The Corn is Green*. Beyond producing *The Lone Ranger*, Chertok would go on to produce *Cavalcade of America* and *General Electric Theater*. Bird, 179, 181.

[79] For discussion of independent telefilm producers in 1940s Hollywood, see Anderson (1997), 422-444.

[80] Signed Television Production Agreement between Apex Film Corporation and The Lone Ranger, Inc., March 22, 1949, clauses 5, 6, 8, 11, and 14. While the contract with Apex explicitly called for the producer to "make a study of television technique in order to determine what changes, if any, can be made from the present motion picture production methods in order to obtain better results for television exhibition, especially with respect to background colors, lighting, close-ups, methods, runs, chases, etc.," Trendle immediately contradicted this higher

production quality rhetoric by also stipulating (in the same clause) that the producer's study should also determine ways to "reduce the price figures" for the series. See clause 8. Trendle would also ask his partner H. Allen Campbell to conduct a study of successful non-filmed television series to see if this added expense was cutting into the licensor's profits. Campbell's response revealed that as of January, 1950, most non-filmed series were actually more costly. For example, Milton Berle cost $25,000 per episode to produce. In contrast, *The Goldbergs* only cost $3,500, but Campbell argued that the show had simply been sold too cheaply and could not be renewed for under $8000/ episode. See interoffice memo, Trendle to Campbell, January 6, 1950 and interoffice memo, Campbell to Trendle, January 19, 1950.

[81] Ibid. Clause 16.

[82] See TLS Trendle to Chertok, February 25, 1949; TLS Trendle to Chertok, December 30, 1949; TLS Trendle to Chertok, April 12, 1950; TLS Harry H. Poppe (Apex accountant) to Trendle, August 13, 1951.

[83] Signed Second Television Production Agreement between Apex Film Corporation and Lone Ranger Inc., February 25, 1952, clause 16.

[84] TLS Chertok to Trendle, September 27, 1949. Chertok might also have shot commercials for the Merita Baking Company in the Southeast, although the latter's resources were limited and spots might have simply featured an announcer in front of a microphone. See TLS Trendle to Chertok, July 15, 1949.

[85] Ibid.

[86] *Hopalong Cassidy* placed 9th in 1950-51 with a 39.9 rating. The series was on NBC. In 1951-52, *Hopalong Cassidy* fell to 28th place with a 32.2 rating. *The Roy Rogers Show* was ranked 27th, with a 32.7 rating. Roy Rogers was also on NBC.

[87] Moore, 27.

[88] Resume General Mills, Inc - Show Productions - Lone Ranger, Inc Contract, February 1, 1949, clauses 4,5,6, and 11

[89] Signed Television Production Agreement between Apex Film Corporation and The Lone Ranger, Inc., March 22, 1949, clause 16.

[90] Hilmes, 80-87.

[91] TLS Trendle to Fralick, April 11, 1949.

[92] TLS Trendle to Harry Poppe, February 14, 1950.

[93] Untitled and un-attributed document. April 30, 1952.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Tony Bennett and Janet Woolacott, Bond and Beyond: The Political Career of a Popular Hero (New York: Methuen, 1997), 44-45.
[96] Ibid.
[97] TLS Trendle to Chertok, April 11, 1950.
[98] Resume General Mills, Inc - Show Productions - Lone Ranger, Inc Contract, February 1, 1949, clauses 9 and 13. The second television contract signed between TCM, General Mills and BSH in March 21, 1952 covered both radio and television rights, dividing them into separate categories, yet stipulating that "each category is dependent upon the other." BSH agreed to pay TCM $7500/week for the radio program and $3000/week for 52 television episodes and a single repeat of each over a second year ($1,092,000 over a two year period). Evidencing the growing confidence both licensor and sponsor now had in the television medium and the diminishing reliance on radio, the contract also allowed BSH to find alternate sponsors for the radio program in major markets (where television was readily available) other than General Mills. Signed contract, March 21, 1952, clauses A5, A9, B7. Hilmes has also argued that simulcasting, though understandable from a network perspective, hastened the demise of radio as a vital public medium (146). As such, General Mills' early success with television led to a gradual lessening of the sponsor's reliance on radio. This would, of course, impact negatively on TCM, who profits derived in large part by maintaining a presence in all media.
[99] TLS Trendle to Fralick, April 11, 1949.
[100] Hilmes, 146.
[101] TLS Striker to Chertok, May 22, 1949 and TLS Trendle to Chertok, May 23, 1949.
[102] TLS Striker to Chertok, May 22, 1949; TLS Trendle to Chertok, August 25, 1949; TLS Trendle to Chertok, December 9, 1949.
[103] TLS Trendle to Chertok, December 9, 1949.
[104] TLS Trendle to Chertok, November 7, 1949.
[105] TLS December 2, 1949.
[106] TLS Trendle to Chertok, December 18, 1949.
[107] TLS Trendle to Chertok, June 19, 1950. In this letter Trendle admits that while others have complained that these stories are not well written because they require narration, "who the Devil cares what they require so long as they are popular and still command top rating?"
[108] TLS Trendle to Chertok, May 20, 1949.

[109] TLS Trendle to Harry Poppe, February 14, 1950.
[110] TLS Chertok to Trendle, July 10, 1950.
[111] TLS Trendle to Chertok, December 9, 1949.
[112] TLS Trendle to Chertok, December 2, 1949.
[113] Trendle had learned from Powell's illegal "impersonation" of the Lone Ranger that advertising the appearance of the 'real' Lone Ranger, when fully managed by the licensor, was a potentially profitable venture. Thus, he offered the suggestion that Beemer be sent to Hollywood as early as 1940 to star in the aborted Gross motion pictures, which would then advertise that "the real, original Lone Ranger [is] the star of this picture."
[114] Quoted in TLS Trendle to Chertok, May 12, 1949.
[115] TLS Trendle to Chertok, June 20, 1949. Trendle voices a similar concern in a letter sent to Chertok on April 11, 1950, after the series has already debuted.
[116] TLS Trendle to Chertok, December 18, 1949. This is the same letter that then explains that referring to the Lone Ranger as a 'story' made people aware that it wasn't real.
[117] Many radio shows that featured adult characters but were targeting children adopted similar strategies. For examples, Radio Superman introduced Jimmy Olsen, Cub Reporter, while Dick Tracy brought Tracy Jr. on board. It is unclear if this strategy resulted out of declining audiences or shifting psychological research into children, which suggested that they identified less with the hero and more with a like-aged companion of the hero that allowed them to tag along for the adventure rather than become the adventurer themselves. Dan Reid appeared in every Wednesday episode of the radio *Lone Ranger* series. Lone Ranger chronology, circa 1953.
[118] Signed Television Production Agreement between Apex Film Corporation and The Lone Ranger, Inc., March 22, 1949, schedule B.
[119] I am excluding the Republic film serials and the various illegal "impersonations" that went on throughout the late 1930s.
[120] On January 18, 1943, the Lone Ranger made a guest appearance on *Jack Armstrong: All American Boy*. The character also made appearances on *Duffy's Tavern* (February 2, 1943), *Breakfast Club* (April 27, 1943), *Quiz Kids* (May 2, 1943), *Meet Your Navy* (May 5, 1943 and May 5, 1944) and *Sterm's Sportscast* (March 24, 1944). Several of these appearances were likely tongue-and-cheek. There is no way of knowing whether audiences of any age bought the veracity of the Lone Ranger, but there is

ample evidence that TCM explicitly prohibited identifying the performer, Brace Beemer, on these broadcasts.

[121] A two-day appearance at the Miami Orange Bowl in 1951 netted the licensor $4500, for which all they supplied was actor Brace Beemer in costume. The circus was responsible for finding Beemer a horse, hiring the supporting cast, and covering the actor's expenses. TCM still had final script approval and could pull out at any time they felt that the performance endangered the reputation or standards they had set for their property. Draft of contract between The Lone Ranger, Inc., and Variety Club of Greater Miami, Tent no. 33, January 12, 1951.

[122] The Montreal and Rhode Island circuses were held September 20-October 4, 1944. Though it is not stipulated anywhere, it is a safe assumption that these circus appearances were either somehow tied into the OWI public service campaign or sponsored by General Mills. Otherwise, it would seem very unlikely that the sponsor would sanction its top salesman to take two weeks off.

[123] TLS Trendle to Moore, August 15, 1949.

[124] Ibid.

[125] Beyond rules for the performance, public appearance licenses were meticulous in prohibiting the circus from procuring local sponsorship for the appearance, using other media or merchandise for promotion or as giveaways (and those allowed, required pre-approval by the licensor), and insisted that the Lone Ranger always get top billing, but NOT appear to directly endorse the agency paying for his services. See Draft of contract between The Lone Ranger, Inc., and Variety Club of Greater Miami, Tent no. 33, January 12, 1951.

[126] Lone Ranger Public Appearance Rules, Circa 1951.

[127] See, for example, script for Lone Ranger personal appearance at Detroit, July 13, 1951.

[128] See for example scripts for Lone Ranger Personal Appearance at Detroit, July 13, 1951 and New York Appearance, circa 1951.

[129] Date of company name change; PR firms hired...

[130] Subject: Lone Ranger Anniversary Story, circa 1953

[131] Ibid.

[132] See Lipsitz, 92-93.

[133] Madison Avenue, "Advertising in Wartime," in The New Republic (February 21, 1944).

[134] Lone Ranger chronology circa 1953

[135] Lone Ranger Don'ts #7, ND circa 1950.
[136] TLS draft, December 21, 1951.
[137] The Lone Ranger: Standards and Background. 1952.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Ibid.
[141] Cohen, 8.
[142] Suggested Lone Ranger Interview For Late Evening Programs at Parent Level. ND. Circa 1951.
[143] The Lone Ranger Standards and Background. Circa 1953.
144. The Lone Ranger Standards and Background. Circa 1953. Rules #1 and 2 are those that prohibit the Lone Ranger from engaging in illicit activities like smoking and making love.
145. Pierre Bourdieu, Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste (London: Routledge, 1984), 365-371.
146. Keith Negus, "Music Divisions: The Recording Industry and the Social Mediation of Cultural Production," in Media Organizations in Society, ed. James Curran (London: Arnold, 2000), 245.
[147] The Origin and Development of the Lone Ranger. Circa 1953.
[148] Suggested Lone Ranger Interview For Late Evening Programs at Parent Level. ND. Circa 1951.
[149] TLS Mandigo to Trendle, February 19, 1952.
[150] TLS Mandigo to Trendle, November 19, 1951. Mandigo had taken the quote from the Standards and Background document Trendle had supplied her with to help create the PR campaign. Trendle would refuse Mandigo's request to use this quote as well as another listed in the S&B document by Vice President Barkley, suggesting that they might have either been made up or that the licensor did not have permission to use these quotes.
[151] Subject: Lone Ranger Anniversary Story. Circa 1953.
[152] Lone Ranger Radio Interview Children Level. ND, circa 1951.
[153] The Lone Ranger Standards and Background. Circa 1953.
[154] See Cohen, 166-168.
[155] Shows like *Amos n' Andy* (1949-1952) and *Beulah* (1950-1953). These shows were adapted from successful radio series, but in the turn to TV cast African Americans in the starring roles rather than using white actors performing minstrelsy, as had been the case with radio *Amos n' Andy*.
[156] See Allison Perlman, "NAACP CHAPTER," in Unpublished dissertation chapter (2006).

[157] Memo, Trendle to Campbell, July 31, 1950. Trendle complains that the ABC standards person is cracking down on the show's description of Tonto as a half-breed, stating that they have done so for eighteen years without remark.
[158] The History of The Lone Ranger, Chapter 2, page 55. Unpublished manuscript. Circa 1954.
[159] The Lone Ranger Standards and Background. Circa 1953.
[160] Ibid.
[161] Lone Ranger Personal Appearance with Tonto script, September 24,1951. Though this example dates after WWII, it is exemplary of the types of personal appearance rhetoric the two performed throughout (and after) the war,
[162] Lone Ranger script excerpt, October 24, 1949.
[163] Ibid.
[164] The Lone Ranger Standards and Background. Circa 1953.
[165] Ibid.
[166] TLS Striker to Chertok, May 22, 1949.
[167] Michele Hilmes, Radio Voices: American Broadcasting, 1922-1952 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 20-21. Hilmes points out that the use of minstrel dialects to represent African Americans had no connection to whether the actor portraying a black character was, in fact, black, or whether a black performer spoke in such speech patterns. The voices behind Amos n' Andy were white men, while Louis Armstrong was actually fired by NBC because he refused to speak in anything other than his normal voice.
[168] Signed Contract Apex Film Productions and Lone Ranger Inc., 1952. Schedule B.
[169] Ibid.
[170] Michael Kimmell, Manhood in America: A Cultural History (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 240.
[171] Subject: Lone Ranger Anniversary Story. Circa 1953.
[172] Ibid.
[173] Ibid.
[174] Gary Cross, Kids' Stuff: Toys and the Changing World of American Childhood (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 164.
[175] "The Lone Ranger Sold For Upwards of $3,000,000". Press Release. Circa November 1954.

[176] The Wrather Corporation also bought up the rights to Lassie and Sergeant Preston of the Yukon. The latter was also a TCM property, which was sold two years after the Lone Ranger.

Chapter Five: Introduction

Despite his day job as a publishing magnate, the Green Hornet always was lagging behind his richer great-uncle, the Lone Ranger. When it came to television, things were no different. While *The Lone Ranger* soared to new heights of popularity and profits in postwar America and was an early television pioneer, partially paving the way for the predominance of the TV Western genre in the 1950s, *The Green Hornet* continued to be haunted by the genre and audience confusions that had been a problem since the late 1930s. Trendle-Campbell-Meurer's (TCM) success with *The Lone Ranger* had caused the licensor to embrace containment strategies that both reproduced and reified the cultural and industrial status quo in order to leverage its management over the property. *The Green Hornet* required something different; it required a willingness to rethink the formula, to innovate and adapt to a shifting cultural and industrial climate. Yet, the generic re-inventions TCM was willing to undertake would not extend to a its business practices, even as the terrain of television production itself was radically altered by the re-emergence of the Hollywood studios and consolidation of network power. TCM's intransigence certainly contributed to its failure to make a

television deal for the Green Hornet property, but it is equally true that its options as an independent licensor operating in this renewed regime of network and studio power were antithetical to the very cultural and economic values that had sustained the company since the 1930s.

To some extent, TCM's failures to extend the Green Hornet brand into television might seem surprising. Dozens of radio series made the leap to TV in the late 1940/ early 1950s, including two of TCM's other properties, *The Lone Ranger* (1949-1957) and *Sergeant Preston of the Yukon* (1955-1958). Early 1950s television also offered greater opportunities for placing a series on television, with a viable first-run syndication market available in case the networks did not bite.[1] Independent producers sold several formulaic genre programs directly to local markets, for example Ziv's success with the TV-adaptation of radio's *The Cisco Kid* (1950-1956) and the spy drama *I Led 3 Lives* (1953-1956). *I Led 3 Lives* was the most successful syndicated program in the country in 1953, suggesting that there was a demand by audiences for crime/espionage dramas and by TV stations for inexpensive product shot on telefilm that could be flexibly inserted into the schedule and made available for local sponsorships. As Ziv's early success, and the emergence of companies like Desilu and Mark VII, attest the 1950s was

the era for “independents.” While many would fold by mid-decade as the networks began consolidating their power and the Hollywood major studios entered into the production market, several independents, including Desilu, would continue to grow. In fact, independently produced telefilm series would become even more important to the networks as the decade progressed.

All of these factors also seemed to favor the Green Hornet brand. TCM labeled the series a crime drama and even revised the Green Hornet formula in order to align it further with other popular crime thrillers. Moreover, TCM had a proven track record of selling its properties inexpensively market-to-market (usually at a fraction of the highest priced like-genre series available). Yet, TCM’s attempts would prove incongruous with industry standards and perceptions of the television audience. The most popular crime series claimed that they were dramatizing real-life events and used semi-documentary aesthetics. Despite efforts to position the Green Hornet brand within these traditions, the formula’s reliance on secret identities, costumed crime fighting, and gadgetry (like the Green Hornet’s gas gun or his super car, the Black Beauty) made it difficult for TCM to convince sponsors that the series possessed the “true crime” appeal that adult audiences allegedly craved.

Even as TCM argued for the adult appeal of its property, the networks continued to frame *The Green Hornet* as juvenile, which was a reversal of their previous concerns that the program was too adult for child radio listeners. TCM's continued comic book licensing endeavors did not improve its position, in spite of the swing within the comic book industry toward more mature crime and horror genres. In fact, the backlash felt within the comic book field further complicated TCM's efforts to reinvent its property. By the early 1950s, comic book publishers, under threat of government regulation, refocused their products almost entirely on the children's market, just as crime dramas on television were embracing 'documentary realism' as adult-oriented fare.

Aside from genre difficulties, TCM could not adapt its business model to meet the rapidly changing culture of television production in the mid-to-late 1950s. In part, TCM's business model was too closely tied to the old commercial radio model. TCM's power rested in its strong relationship with corporate sponsors, advertising agencies, and independent stations, all of whom were being pushed to the side by the end of the 1950s. Moreover, even as other independents diversified their interests in order to stay relevant, expanding into multiple series' productions, distribution, syndication, merchandising, etc., TCM was

actually moving backwards. The radio market for live and transcribed dramatic series dried up by mid-decade, depriving the company of its only direct production tie. From the mid-1950s onward, TCM operated only as a licensor. Furthermore, Trendle was simply unwilling to give up his intermediary status and managerial authority, which had sustained TCM's licensing practices since the early 1930s. As the networks increased their control over television production throughout the 1950s, independent producers found themselves needing to adjust to new, less autonomous roles or risk being squeezed out. The same was true of independent licensors.

TCM often responded to changing production conditions by reasserting its long history of successful management to prove that it should be given an opportunity to produce a *Green Hornet* television series. Its efforts to leverage the established selling power of its company and property were often met with skepticism over the Green Hornet's long-worn status. On the one hand, TCM's arguments floundered because the Green Hornet did not have the sales credibility the Lone Ranger possessed. On the other hand, its discourse of "tried-and-true" failed to resonate with changing attitudes within the television industry that was seeking new ideas or, at least, new versions of old ones. The recycling

strategies that had fueled TCM's successes for two decades were incompatible with an institutional production culture that could afford to demand updated products.

In part, TCM's unwillingness to change production strategies demonstrates its outdated practices, but it also points to the fewer outlets available to independents to make a profitable deal in the classical network era. TCM could ill-afford to produce a new *Green Hornet* pilot every year without guarantee of the series being picked up. Those willing to put up the money increasingly wanted a bigger stake of the profits, including merchandising and syndication, to offset the risks. While both Trendle and *The Green Hornet* would have one last hurrah in the mid 1960s when William Dozier's Greenaway Productions took an interest in the property (see next chapter), the interim period between 1948-1964 would result in TCM's dissolution as an independent licensing agency as would the integration of many of the practices and strategies it and other licensors developed into larger corporate structures who now licensed in-house. Significantly, the late 1950s were a transition period not only because the networks and Hollywood major studios began centralizing their authority over television production, but also because they would do so by appropriating the successful strategies and practices introduced by

independent producers and licensors, while marginalizing the cultural authority of these independents. While some adapted to the new climate, others like Trendle refused to abandon their position as autonomous moral arbiters and brand managers.

In the rest of this chapter, I first will briefly outline the Green Hornet brand's checkered history throughout the late 1940s and early 1950 and will situate its progression within changing cultural and production contexts. I then will explore in greater detail TCM's attempts to redress the Green Hornet formula to meet new expectations of "realism" in the crime drama and will identify why potential networks and sponsors were not impressed sufficiently by these changes. Finally, I will address TCM's refusal to adjust its business model in the face of institutional changes and will argue that cultural valuations of its own autonomy and authority played as big a part as economic rationales in TCM's intransigence.

THE GREEN HORNET POSTWAR BUSINESS

TCM was as active throughout the 1950s as any independent licensor. The Lone Ranger brand was a phenomenal success (see previous chapter). *Sergeant Preston of the Yukon*, which the licensor had first introduced on radio in 1940, followed *The Lone Ranger* to television in

1955, lasting three seasons and seventy-eight episodes on the CBS network sponsored by Quaker Oats. CBS intentionally scheduled *Sergeant Preston* against ABC's *Lone Ranger* on Thursday nights at 7:30PM. By 1954, a year before *Sergeant Preston* debuted on television, however, TCM had already sold off the Lone Ranger brand to the Wrather Corporation for $3,000,000. In 1957, TCM would sell the Sergeant Preston brand to Wrather as well for $1,500,000. Raymond Meurer's involvement with TCM decreased after the Lone Ranger sale, when he briefly was employed by Jack Wrather's company to help sort through the legal concerns resulting from the transfer of copyright ownership. By the end of the decade, H. Allen Campbell also was considering other projects. Even though the day-to-day operations of the licensor were now almost exclusively in Trendle's hands, both Allen Campbell and Meurer remained stockholders in the Green Hornet, Inc., meaning that Trendle still required their approval on any deal he made.[2]

While the Green Hornet was not as successful as either the Lone Ranger or Sergeant Preston, TCM continued to work on extending the brand throughout the postwar era, with mixed results. Shifting production conditions coupled with the licensor's "purposeful" neglect of the brand complicated efforts to transform the Green Hornet into the same type of

profitable and popular icon as TCM's other properties. Toward the end the decade, Trendle would claimed that his company devoted less effort to the Green Hornet than the other two franchises because the revenues earned from the Lone Ranger and Sergeant Preston were so high, that consequently 90 percent of any earnings from the Green Hornet would have been taken away in taxes.[3] While there is some truth to the fact that TCM had its hands full with its other properties, the company certainly did not ignore the Green Hornet. The licensor simply struggled to make the brand resonate with sponsors and licensees.

In the postwar years, comic books were perhaps the most successful market that the Green Hornet brand tapped. Harvey Publications, Inc., published a quarterly 48-page Green Hornet comic book from 1941-1949, with print runs ranging from 400,000-600,000 copies (this reflects the number of copies printed and distributed to retailers, not the number of copies sold, which would have been far less). TCM continued to maintain that the Green Hornet brand appealed to adults and the postwar era saw a burgeoning adult audience for comic books, partially because G.I.'s had become regular comic book readers during the war (an estimated 25 percent of readers were high school graduates).[4],Harvey Comics, however, had a distinct children's appeal.

The company would eventually become best known for publishing *Richie Rich* and *Casper, the Friendly Ghost* comic books. In the 1940s, Harvey's other radio adaptation was *Terry and the Pirates*, a series that made no qualms about targeting children.

Throughout the 1940s, Harvey paid TCM 15 percent of net profits per issue, but in 1947, the royalty agreement was changed to a $1000 minimum on each issue printed, plus 15 percent on profits exceeding that minimum.[5] By the late 1940s, however, the rising cost of newsprint was severely cutting into Harvey's profits. Newsprint costs had risen significantly in the postwar era as the OPA's wartime price controls were loosened and eventually abandoned. In 1942, newsprint cost $51/ton. In 1947, the cost had risen to $91/ton. TCM's contract with Harvey did not take into account cost hikes in printing. Harvey tried in vain to renegotiate, offering TCM 1/4 cent on every comic book sold instead of the flat $1000 minimum royalty. Trendle balked, preferring the stability of a guaranteed royalty to speculative returns on comic book sales.[6] After issue #43 was published, in November 1949, the contract was not renewed.

TCM's timing in canceling its comic book contract proved unfortunate, as the early 1950s were boom years for the comic book industry. The number of published titles rose from 300 in 1950 to 650 in

1953. Revenue rose accordingly from $41 million to $90 million. In 1953, it was estimated that the American public spent nearly $1 billion on comic book purchases at a nickel or dime an issue. The number of comic books in circulation was estimated to have risen from 17 million in 1940 to 70 million in 1953. As the next section will elaborate, however, there were other reasons why TCM was not able simply to sign with a different comic book company that had to do with the Green Hornet's formula butting heads with the comic book industry's heavy investment in the "true crime" genre .

TCM also continued to have troubles placing a Green Hornet comic strip with a major syndicate. Though the licensor had been singing the praises of a comic strip's cross-marketing potential since the late 1930s, nothing had ever materialized. In part, this had to do with the mis-timing of the radio series' network-hopping in the early 1940s with the release of Universal's film serials and with the failure to attract other media and merchandising outlets that saw the stability of a proven radio presence as a prerequisite for investment. Newspaper syndicates were particularly loath to publish comic strips without proven track records. This would only intensify in the postwar era and into the 1950s. As Lloyd E. Smith, president of the Western Printing and Lithographing Company,

explained to Raymond Meurer in 1953, “the comic strip field is very much overcrowded... many of them are reluctant to take on a new strip until they are convinced that there is a special reason for doing so, such as a great deal of promotion and publicity behind a name.”[7] Moreover, newspaper syndicates increasingly were reluctant to develop properties they did not own outright.[8] In this manner, TCM possibly suffered from its own successful cross-promotion efforts, as by the 1950s syndicates were increasingly seeing the value of comic strip properties as brands first to be licensed to other media and manufacturing outlets, and only secondarily as popular strips in their own right. It is not coincidental that the early 1950s saw the births of two of the most merchandised comic strips of all time, Charles Schultz’s *Peanuts* (first run in 1950) and Hank Ketchum’s *Dennis the Menace* (first run in 1951).

Green Hornet merchandising also was virtually non-existent. TCM devoted most of its efforts to licensing the Lone Ranger and Sergeant Preston of the Yukon, claiming that any profits they might have earned from the Green Hornet would have been eaten up by taxes because of the large sums of money being generated through the other two brands. Meanwhile, the Green Hornet brand’s continued inability to land a steady radio sponsor and its absence from television also contributed to the basic

lack of exposure necessary for generating interest by other licensees. As Smith's aforementioned correspondence with Meurer continued, "In this way the television program of the GREEN HORNET when it starts will certainly be of great help [in landing a comic strip deal]."

Throughout the postwar period, *The Green Hornet* radio program was largely broadcast on a sustaining basis over the ABC radio network. The series made the jump from NBC Blue to ABC in November 1945 and would remain unsponsored until June 1947 when General Mills, also sponsoring *The Lone Ranger*, took on the series, airing it a 7:30PM and oddly choosing to play Betty Crocker commercials during the advertising breaks. General Mills cancelled its contract in August 1948. ABC once again took the series up on a sustaining basis and immediately moved it to a 5:00PM time slot. As a sustaining rather than a sponsored series, TCM was paid far less for the series. In 1948, ABC paid TCM $750 per broadcast, a fraction of the $2000 per broadcast TCM was asking from potential sponsors.[9] The series was also subject to ABC's scheduling decisions. Whereas it was assumed that both adults and children listened at 7:30PM, 5:00PM was a far less ambiguous time that clearly targeted children.

ABC immediately issued Trendle a warning about toning down the

violence and mature content on the series. Trendle complained that he did not have an interest in making a children's program (though he admitted that *The Green Hornet* did have a healthy children's following to complement its adult audience), but capitulated that his company was delighted to have the program placed at any time ABC felt might help it procure a new sponsor.[10] Similarly, when Orange-Crush assumed sponsorship of the radio series in November 1951 and placed it on the Mutual Broadcasting System as part of the network's "kid block" from 5:00-6:00PM, TCM took no exception.[11] Advocacy groups regularly derided the crime genre as bad for children, and sponsors were either loathe to take on this negative publicity or demanded that the program be softened in order to appease concerned parents. Radio network and sponsor demands conflicted with the direction both comic book publishers and television was taking the crime genre, which was decidedly more adult in tone.

Revealing the extent to which radio's centrality for sponsors was beginning to erode by the early 1950s, Orange-Crush initially also willing only to enter into a transcription arrangement with TCM at a cost of $500 per acetate recording.[12] Orange-Crush selectively chose the markets to broadcast these recording, leaving much of the country without the

program. The apparent success of the program in assisting Orange-Crush sales agents in reaching retailers led to a live recording contract in May 1952, which promised $4000 per week for two episodes.[13] Orange-Crush then abruptly cancelled its contract on June 4, 1952.

Orange-Crush's exact reasons for pulling out of its contract are unclear. The company changed management in November 1952 and, according to Charles C. Fitzmorris of Fitzmorris and Miller Advertising, the new O-C head, Jack Thompson, did not believe in network radio as an advertising medium. Fitzmorris's arrangements with Orange-Crush, however, were somewhat dubious. The advertising agent sought to convince TCM that the May, 1952 contract did not require Orange-Crush's signature in order to be legally binding; it was only after TCM insisted upon this signature that the deal was cancelled. Orange-Crush also dropped Fitzmorris and Miller as its advertising agency soon afterwards. Trendle continued to hold Fitzmorris accountable for the contract, to no avail. In his correspondence with Fitzmorris, Trendle admitted that his company was counting on the Orange-Crush revenue to pay for a portion of the television pilot.[14]

TCM understood full well the increasingly central role television was playing after 1949 in furthering trans-media licensing and

merchandising arrangements, especially for comic books and comic strips. As early as December 1950 TCM tried to bring the Green Hornet to the small screen by attempting to buy outright the two film serials, produced by Universal Pictures in 1940 and 1941, to exhibit on television. Christopher Anderson, Michele Hilmes, and Michael Kackman, amongst others, have pointed to the early presence of Hollywood B-westerns on television.[15] These serials and shorts often were crudely spliced together and sold to local markets seeking to fill programming gaps and attract local sponsorship. In the early years of television, the first-run syndication market offered lucrative possibilities for independent producers to sell repackaged Hollywood B-fare as well as cheaply produced series shot on telefilm. William Boyd is often pointed to as having successfully relaunched the Hopalong Cassidy franchise after acquiring the television rights to the B-films he starred in throughout the 1930s and recirculating them on television.[16] TCM's negotiations with Universal suggest that B-westerns were not the only Hollywood product that was deemed marketable on television. Universal and TCM reached an initial agreement on December 21, 1950, in which TCM agreed to pay $90,000 for both serials while granting Universal the foreign rights for six years.[17] The deal was contingent upon TCM finding a sponsor for the serials. By January

31, 1951 Trendle conceded that he was unable to procure sponsorship because advertisers were reluctant to take on both serials at once.[18] TCM's failure to place the serials with a television sponsor may also have been due to the limited number of episodes available. There were only 30 Green Hornet "chapters" versus dozens of Hopalong Cassidy film shorts.

While the networks primarily concentrated on producing live anthology dramas during television's early years, they quickly recognized the value of telefilm in shoring up their control over affiliates and sponsors alike. Telefilm series could be "brokered" by networks to sponsors, inverting the live radio and anthology drama model, in which sponsors sought to use networks as common carriers for programming created by sponsors and their advertising agencies.[19] Additionally, telefilm series offered far more flexibility than the live-anthology model. Telefilm allowed networks to rearrange the programming schedule at will and to time-delay materials for opposite coasts (whereas a live show broadcast out of a New York studio at 7PM would either be seen at 4PM, off-peak hours, in Los Angeles or need to be performed twice, either costing networks viewers or increasing their expenses). It also afforded networks the opportunity for residuals by selling an off-network series into syndication once it had run its course on the network. In fact, telefilm

series allowed the networks to hedge their bets entirely, giving them the option to either broadcast a series on the network or sell it directly into the first-run market. Networks began syndicating both first-run and rerun programming as early as 1951.[20] By assuming greater control over the first-run syndication market and by offering affiliates better quality programming, the networks succeeded in either marginalizing or reeling in independent producers who previously had operated alongside or even outside of the network's clutches.

TCM expressed very little interest in the first-run syndication market during television's early years, preferring the comforts of procuring sponsorship over a national network. The licensor had moved away from the market-to-market sales approach in the early 1940s and it had tremendous initial success with *The Lone Ranger* TV series sponsored by General Mills over ABC-TV. General Mills and its advertising agency, not ABC, were responsible for selling the series to markets still without an ABC affiliate. It perhaps was only natural that TCM would seek to replicate that model with *The Green Hornet*. By the time TCM recognized that it was not going to be able to do so, both the first-run syndication market and the number of independent producers still actively pursuing local single-sponsors had greatly diminished. Moreover, the continued

juvenile label thrust on the Green Hornet brand made it difficult to attract the largely beer and gasoline companies who continued to sponsor locally syndicated programming.[21]

Perhaps the single greatest reason though why TCM could not develop a Green Hornet television series as it had with the Lone Ranger and Sergeant Preston was that the former lacked the track record of its fellow-properties. Early television was an unproven, and thus expensive, proposition for sponsors, even for cheaply produced series. Many early television series adapted successful radio programs, often simulcast on both media to lessen the potential production cost for sponsors. Likewise, many early television series were paid for by their radio sponsors and appeared on the television network equivalents as their radio homes. General Mills paid for *The Lone Ranger* television series to be broadcast on the ABC network, the same network that had been airing the radio series since 1946 for the same sponsor, who had been attached to the Lone Ranger property since 1941. By 1952, *The Green Hornet* radio series was broadcast on the Mutual Broadcasting System. Mutual was the only radio network not actively seeking to move into television. TCM could not count on the network to help procure a TV deal as it had with ABC for *The Lone Ranger*. Mutual necessarily attracted more conservative

sponsors unwilling to invest in the more experimental medium. Orange-Crush was under fairly conservative management that did not see the value of pursuing the unproven television market (though it did demand the right of first refusal for any future TV deal in its contract).[22] Moreover, *The Green Hornet* had not sustained a sponsor for more than a couple of years consecutively and had moved back-and-forth across networks throughout the late 1930s and early 1940s (see chapter 2). In fact, by 1950, it had spent more years on the air on a sustaining basis than as a sponsored series. In part, this had to do with the feared generic unsuitability of the Green Hornet formula for its assumed juvenile audience (despite TCM's claims that the series was intended for adults). Consequently, even though the series had been around since 1937 and had fairly decent ratings on the radio, it was still seen by many early television sponsors as speculative at best.[23]

Unable to convince a sponsor to invest in the Green Hornet serials, TCM decided to finance the production a television pilot that it would use to land a regular TV series. TCM entered into a contract with Jack Chertok at Apex Film Corporation on November 13, 1951 to produce a *Green Hornet* pilot. The total cost was $27,500, to be paid in three installments.[24] Chertok was also producing *The Lone Ranger* television series for TCM at

the time. The pilot's price tag was high for an independently produced television program shot on telefilm. *The Lone Ranger* pilot had been shot for only $10,000 and by 1951, individual episodes of that series were being filmed at $13,600 each. While the Green Hornet's urban contemporary setting might have driven the price up, Ziv's similarly contemporary *I Led 3 Lives* (1953-1956) cost only approximately $18,000 per episode.[25] Likewise, Schatz notes that the average cost per telefilm episode sold by independents to the networks in 1951-52 was $14,000.[26] TCM might have sought to sell a Green Hornet series directly to a sponsor through a major network as it had with *The Lone Ranger* series, foregoing the market-to-market approach that independents like Ziv and Boyd specialized in. The budget for *The Green Hornet* pilot suggests that they were trying to impress a large sponsor, not produce an affordable series for local sponsors. Regardless, *The Green Hornet* pilot's cost likely priced the property out of the first-run syndication market.[27] Thus, without enough of a proven track record to appeal to national sponsors or networks, and too expensive for local sponsorship and the first-run syndication market, *The Green Hornet* failed to make the leap to TV.

Despite this initial setback, TCM tried to generate a *Green Hornet* TV series throughout the decade and well into the early 1960s. After all,

TV was essential to extending the brand into other media and merchandising arenas. The licensor tried various strategies to convince sponsors, networks, and producers that a *Green Hornet* series could be as successful as any of the other crime shows on TV, as well as any of the adult westerns that would come to dominate the networks' prime time lineups by the mid-1950s. TCM was even willing to alter the Green Hornet formula - within limits - to make the brand more adult-friendly. As the next section will explore in greater detail, the licensor also continually misunderstood the distinctions between its brand and the changing conventions of both the crime and western genres in which it repeatedly attempted to situate *The Green Hornet*, further confusing the way the brand was marketed.

GENRE REFORMULATION AND CONFUSION

Even as the Green Hornet brand supposedly existed above and outside of the particular texts and products in which it was featured, the Green Hornet formula relied on particular genre conventions for its articulation. The Green Hornet's adventures positioned the brand within a crime drama narrative, but the Green Hornet's characterization was intended to update the Lone Ranger's personality, infusing elements of the

western into an urban milieu. Like the Lone Ranger, the Green Hornet was a masked vigilante fighting to clean up crime, while existing on the margins of the society he vowed to protect. While the western hero could never fully be civilized, his urban counterpart resorted to a dual identity in order to move in and out of society's institutions. Beyond this, both the Lone Ranger and Green Hornet were accompanied by racialized sidekicks and used violence to administer swift justice. Moreover, both brands were designed to produce premiums and adorn merchandise that appealed most directly to children (despite Trendle's repeated efforts to reposition *The Green Hornet* radio series as targeting adults). As argued in chapter 3, the comparisons King-Trendle made in the 1930s between the two brands negatively impacted the Green Hornet's popularity amongst sponsors and manufacturers. These troubles would be further confounded in the 1950s by the divergent directions the crime drama and western genres would take on television, along with their mutual though differently-constructed appeals to adult consumers. While the Green Hornet brand mixed elements from both genres, the Green Hornet formula conformed to neither. The formula adjustments TCM would attempt to make only seemed to confuse matters further.

By the early 1950s, there were several successful crime series

already on television being produced by independents for both the networks and the first-run syndication market alike. These included Mark VII's *Dragnet* (195X-1958) on NBC, *Treasury Men in Action* (1950-1954) on ABC/NBC and Ziv's syndicated *I Led 3 Lives* and *The Man Called X* (1955-1957). *I Led 3 Lives* was America's top-rated syndicated series for nearly a year.[28] The popularity of the crime drama certainly seemed to favor TCM making a *Green Hornet* deal. After all, the Green Hornet formula fit the crime series bill. The Green Hornet busted up rackets in an urban setting that the police could not touch.

Multiple elements distinguished these series from the Green Hornet concept, including: 1) the protagonists for these series were usually lawmen and/or government agents battling Communist infiltrators (though *Dragnet* dealt with garden-variety criminals as well); 2) these series were often endorsed by the CIA or FBI as effectively teaching American's about the imminent dangers of Communist expansionism; 3) these series transformed their limited budgets from liabilities to assets by promoting a semi-documentary aesthetic that gave the show a "real" look; and perhaps most importantly 4) these series claimed to be based on real events and people.[29] *I Led 3 Lives* told the story of Herbert Philbrick, an actual undercover spy who infiltrated Communist rings for the US

government. Similarly, *Dragnet* stated at the beginning of every episode that all events depicted were true, with only names and dates changed to protect the innocent. According to Kackman, the reality claims made by these series served both as effective marketing and demonstrations of television's civic responsibility. "Thus while produced on the cheap, these shows relied on their documentary status to gain credibility as quality television with a civic function."[30]

TCM did its best to reconstruct the Green Hornet formula to conform to these emerging criteria. In keeping with the licensor's concern for inter-textual consistency, the Green Hornet formula was altered at the brand level, with changes incorporated into all Green Hornet texts. The most significant change that TCM made to the Green Hornet formula in the 1950s was to contain their hero within the law. Previously, the character was written as a vigilante who went after criminals the legal system could not bring down. The Green Hornet was feared and despised by criminals and the police alike --in fact, one of the recurring subplots of the radio series had been that Britt Reid's bodyguard, ex-cop Mike Axford, was determined to bring the Green Hornet to justice, never realizing that his boss was secretly the anti-hero he was hunting.[31] In a cold war climate where subversion of authority was viewed suspiciously,

TCM recast the hero as an upstanding citizen and a "civic corruption investigator," who worked with the law to hunt down Communist threats and other non-conforming elements.[32] As Trendle explained to Leon Harvey about the direction for future Green Hornet comic book stories, "change [has]... been made in the formula to take Britt Reid out of the criminal class and have him work with the police."[33]

While this formula change was certainly opportunistic, as it sought to build on the growth of congressional investigations and special prosecutors hunting down Communist threats in the US, it also was motivated by discourses of civic duty that could be found in other crime series. TCM had sought to have its brands endorse civic participation since the 1930s with the Lone Ranger Safety Clubs. Publicity kits sent in 1952 to local radio stations on the Mutual network, designed to assist in the promotion of the Orange-Crush-sponsored series, encouraged salesmen to forge connections with "vigilante committees" and "social agencies" that were "mushrooming up all over the nation... [to aid in] the suppression of crime and the exposing of racketeers."[34] These largely anti-Communist groups were seen as sites of positive endorsement that would boost sales similar to the earlier Lone Ranger Safety Club efforts to get local police and public officials to lend support to that show's (sponsor's) efforts to

teach about traffic safety. Unsurprisingly, the tip-sheet for radio salesmen also encouraged them to promote the series in local schools with radio clubs as an example of outstanding mystery because "justice always triumphs."[35]

TCM also flirted with ways to make the Green Hornet formula conform to the increased emphasis on "realism" in the crime genre. Harvey Comics approached TCM in 1948 about adapting the Green Hornet comic book to follow this true crime formula in an effort to bolster sales. Harvey's efforts to shift the Green Hornet formula anticipated the trend that several comic book publishers in the early 1950s would pursue to produce titles that catered to a growing teen and young adult consumer base.[36] The genres that were most successful with this demographic were the horror and true crime books, many of which seemed to question and undermine conformist middle class values.[37] Between 1950-1954, as a testament to the sales success of these types of books, twenty-eight different companies published nearly 100 titles in these genres.[38]

Harvey's idea was to have the Green Hornet narrate a lurid tale of corruption and crime that would end with the message that crime did not pay, but in the process would focus more on the criminal than on the hero who brought them to justice.[39] TCM briefly considered the idea, asking

Harvey for a sample story, but also worried about legal problems that would arise from people claiming that the story recounted their lives without permission.[40] Moreover, the licensor was unwilling to experiment with storytelling styles that took the spotlight off its property, in favor of promoting characters it did not license outright. They refused Harvey's suggestion of emphasizing the words "racket buster" in the comic book's title because "we are definitely taking the play away from the Green Hornet and putting it on Racket Busters... we would be the parties who would be helping you to build up a new comic magazine... and the GREEN HORNET could very readily be eliminated after a short period."[41]

Furthermore, comic books that focused on crime were also coming under attack for their anti-authoritarian stories that either glamorized criminality or equated moral corruption with middle-class values. Failing to recognize the shifting age demographic of comic book readers, many critics pointed to these same titles aimed at adults as proof that comic books were corrupting American youth, contributing to juvenile delinquency, and possibly leading to increased Communist sympathy, criminality, and even homosexuality.[42] Frederick Wertham published in 1954his highly influential indictment of comic books, *Seduction of the*

Innocent, which decried their harmful effect on children and their sinister ability to turn youth against their parents. On April 22, 1954, one day before the Army-McCarthy hearings commenced, the Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency began its investigation of the comic book industry. The subcommittee's most vocal member, Senator Estes Kefauver, argued, "not even the Communist conspiracy could devise a more effective way to demoralize, disrupt, confuse and destroy our future citizens than apathy on the part of adult Americans to the scourge known as juvenile delinquency."[43] At the heart of the problem, Kefauver saw the unregulated publishing of horror and true crime comics.[44]

TCM's formula modification also was somewhat determined by its need to separate the Green Hornet property from the crime genre with which it had previously been associated. As the licensor explained to Helen Meyer at Dell Publishing, "the force for good and patriotism and justice, together with scientific adventure and the outstanding sports car, coupled with the fact that the dominant character, Britt Reid, is a newspaper publisher, we believe, sets the Green Hornet apart from a 'crime Series.'"[45] TCM thus was caught in a bind. While it reworked the Green Hornet formula to make it conform to emerging crime genre semi-

documentary conventions on television aimed at adult audiences, it was unwilling to make changes that might make the property controversial amongst radio sponsors and other potential licensees who still defined the brand as primarily targeting children. The licensor remained economically tied to the interests of its sponsors and network relations, making refusal to comply with their wishes virtually impossible.

By 1952, the radio series was no longer on the air and TCM was much more assertive in claiming a distinctly adult audience for *The Green Hornet*. Trendle blamed the time slot the series had occupied on radio for previous sponsor misperceptions of *The Green Hornet's* child appeal.[46] He pointed to outdated statistics that proved the series had an adult following.[47] He hypothesized that because the series still resonated in popular memory, an adult audience was clamoring for its television version to debut.[48] He reasoned that only slight variations in the characters' appearances, the insertion of a romantic lead in place of a sleek automobile, and the drawing of story ideas from newspaper headlines were all that would be needed to modernize the property. As he wrote to Leo Bland, "I know your office has this typed as a juvenile show, but I shall be delighted to put long skirts on the automobile, and whiskers on Britt Reid, if that will make any difference."[49]

While TCM had rejected Harvey's suggestions, it was willing to promote the brand's ability to tackle modern-day threats taken directly from the newspaper headlines of the day. Writing to Leonard Goldenson at ABC, Trendle promised that a *Green Hornet* series would "follow the latest newspaper stories of crime, political grafting and intrigue" in order to appeal to an adult audience supposedly clamoring for "realism."[50] In another instance Trendle wrote to John Goetz at NBC suggesting, "The present steel strike negotiations could easily be a basis for a GREEN HORNET-TV show. The negotiations with Russia, the Cuban situation, All of these things could be made into fascinating television shows and create a huge audience."[51]

Yet, perhaps because TCM desired to extend the brand into other media that catered more exclusively to children, such as comic books and comic strips, the licensor regularly tempered its claims to an adult audience by pointing to *The Green Hornet's* potential for pleasing both adults and children. The same letter to Goetz spells out that though a *Green Hornet* TV series could be slanted toward an adult audience, it would "still capture the youth of America, because it is a show that will always be timely."[52] Moreover, the licensor never addressed the fundamental distinction between his brand and other crime genre series on

TV in the 1950s, namely the completely science-fiction basis for *The Green Hornet*. Kackman argues that the truth claims made by crime series in the 1950s were often more rhetorical flourish than fact, pointing to the great liberties they took in presenting historical events and to their tendency to "translate distant geopolitical events into familiar, and often familial, everyday incidents" rooted in the melodramatic tradition, rather than the documentary one. Still, these series were at least able to point to an actual person or event they were fictionalizing.[53] *The Green Hornet* sought to combine elements of the semi-documentary with aspects from superhero and mystery genres, including Britt Reid's secret identity and use of cool gadgetry and disguise to catch criminals. Trendle never bothered to address how the Green Hornet's costuming and gadgetry might potentially deter his property's claims to realism, instead positioning the Green Hornet as providing the best of both worlds. "I think it would be a much better show than *Dragnet*, or any of that type and with the gadget, known as a 'gas gun' we retain the youngsters and still interest the adult audience."[54]

As the 1950s drew to a close, the institutional and social conditions that had produced the semi-documentary phase in crime dramas began to dissipate. TCM, however, continued to advocate for a *Green Hornet* series

that responded precisely to the civic mission and semi-documentary narrative logic of the earlier series. As late as 1958, Trendle's point of comparison for a *Green Hornet* series remained *Dragnet*. *Dragnet* had been a top rated show throughout the first half of the 1950s, even eclipsing *I Love Lucy* in a 1953 poll and winning several awards, including *TV Guide's* "best cop show" and the Emmy for Best Mystery, Action or Adventure program from 1952-1954 respectively. By 1958, the series' popularity was diminishing as was the network's interest in this type of program.

The Hollywood majors entered into series production in 1955, bringing with them vastly improved production values and increased production costs. Studio production for television became the norm by the end of the decade. Series like *Dragnet* began to look amateurish and plodding in comparison. The first-run syndication market dwindled as the networks expanded both their schedules and affiliate base. The number of cheaply produced telefilm series declined as affiliates took advantage of the better quality programs offered by the networks and studios. Moreover, the waning of the Red Scare resulted in television no longer seeking federal endorsement of its public service mission. As Kackman summarizes, "The narrative model of 'documentary melodrama' that was

the product of these peculiar political relationships was becoming increasingly unwieldy in practice, and unconvincing to audiences; the simplistic treatment of the national interest central to the format was growing suspect, even to the point of parody."[55] By the late 1950s the type of reverence for authority that series like *Dragnet* or *Naked City* (1958-1963) were steeped in (and with which *The Green Hornet* sought to align itself) was beginning to be phased out and replaced by a new breed of cop show like *77 Sunset Strip* (1958-1964) and *Peter Gunn* (1958-1961), which injected humor and action into its plots and updated the hard-boiled private-eye, making him less authoritarian and more in tune with social issues.[56] The continued comparisons Trendle sought to draw with *Dragnet* inevitably worked against the licensor's efforts to have his property taken seriously as adult fare.

TCM took the Green Hornet formula very seriously. Whereas the Green Hornet brand had been too unrealistic to conform to early 1950s crime drama expectations, the licensor's continued refusal to recognize the Green Hornet's parodic possibilities toward the end of the decade proved just as out of touch with industry conceptualizations of their audience. Amazingly, the crime genre was neither the only point of reference TCM attempted to use for *The Green Hornet*, nor was it the most improbable.

Though TCM devoted most of its energy in the 1950s to aligning *The Green Hornet* with other crime dramas, the licensor also regularly made comparisons between the brand and the adult westerns that were overtaking the prime time lineups by mid-decade. Building on the success of the B-westerns and more kid-friendly fare like *The Lone Ranger* and *Hopalong Cassidy* on early 1950s television, adult westerns were primarily produced by the Hollywood majors, a vast majority by Warner Bros. Conversion of their B-film units to television studios, and offsetting the costs of series production through their motion picture output (and vice-versa), put the studios in a position to produce more expensive programming than the independents and to hold out longer to recoup expenses, which meant that they could sell initial series for far less than independent producers could.

In 1954, Disney Studios entered into a production arrangement with ABC to produce *Disneyland*. As Christopher Anderson argues, ABC was the most likely candidate to welcome filmed Hollywood products because of its perennial third-place status. Disney was eager because it saw the program as an opportunity to publicize its theme park and as a way to recycle its cartoon shorts that no longer were being shown in movie theaters.[57] At the same time, Columbia Studios' subsidiary, Screen

Gems, began producing *Father Knows Best* for CBS. In 1955, Warner Bros., the first Hollywood major, joined in. *Warner Bros Presents* adapted three of the studios biggest film hits, *Cheyenne, King's Row*, and *Casablanca* into TV series. While the latter two would not catch on, *Cheyenne* lasted eight seasons.[58] The majors offered primarily one-hour series and guaranteed "superior production values."[59] By 1959, 80 percent of the three networks' prime-time schedules were being produced in Hollywood. Series like *Gunsmoke* (1955-1975), *The Rifleman* (1958-1963), and *Maverick* (1957-1962) tackled more adult-oriented themes, like racism, poverty, and post-traumatic syndrome. They used their historical setting and genre conventions to resolve conflict through old-fashioned fisticuffs or black-hat versus white-hat shootouts.[60] By the mid 1950s, "adult" westerns made up the majority of prime time television's line up, peaking in 1959 when they accounted for 30 individual series and 26 percent of the total network prime time schedule.

TCM sought to align its Green Hornet property with this craze. It told General Mills President Henry Cox in 1957 that "THE GREEN HORNET would match ratings with your Wyatt Earp, without question" and Vice-President Clifford Samuelson in 1959 that a TV series "will have a much greater audience appeal, also an adult appeal as large as any of the

so-called adult Westerns."[61] At other instances, Trendle insisted that the series could be made as "adult" as *Gunsmoke* with very little change to the overall formula.[62] While TCM's comparisons might initially seem desperate or ridiculous, it is important to recall that TCM did not think of *The Green Hornet* as exclusively a crime series, but primarily as a branded formula that intentionally bore similarities to its *Lone Ranger* cousin. As such, the licensor had no difficulty in comparing *The Green Hornet* to both crime and western genre series present on TV during this decade as part of its efforts to sell the property. Interestingly, Warner Bros., would similarly exhibit little difficulty in swapping out the formulas for its crime and western TV series, suggesting both their generic similarities, and what Chris Anderson has referred to as "the pathology of mass production" that dominated late-1950s TV, in which shows were assembled with seemingly interchangeable parts.[63]

The Green Hornet's modern setting, however, made it very difficult for the formula to address the same issues in a similar way to the adult western. Adult westerns appealed to sponsors and networks alike because they could take contemporary social concerns and reposition them in the American past. These problems could be resolved through the western genre's penchant for dichotomous articulations of right and wrong

and bursts of violence that ignored the increasingly complex bureaucratic and social conditions of contemporary life.[64] The Green Hornet's fight against racketeers repositioned the hero as part of the bureaucratic machine. Moreover, the Green Hornet's use of violence to resolve contemporary concerns seemed simplistic and resulted in the brand consistently being labeled "juvenile" even as the licensor compared it with other adult westerns.[65] Interestingly, this label was a reversal of the concerns expressed in the early 1940s when national broadcasters feared the series too adult for a presumed children's audience because of its violent nature.

The assumed juvenile appeal of *The Green Hornet* was reinforced through formula revisions that transformed the hero from a mysterious vigilante into a costumed super-cop. Furthermore, the poorly designed and/or timed comparisons with other genre programs, whether *westerns* or crime dramas, made it difficult for TCM to sell the property even as the adult western craze seemed destined to be replaced by spy programming by the early 1960s.[66] Trendle often expressed exasperation over his inability to convince sponsors and network executives that *The Green Hornet* could have an adult appeal. On January 5, 1959, he wrote to Thomas W. Moore of ABC, "I am indeed sorry that you have not been

able to convince anyone that THE GREEN HORNET is an adult show, or can be made so with very little change. It bothers me very much, not because it makes an awful lot of difference whether we get a sponsor or not, but because I cannot get across the idea of the show being an adult product. It just lets me down badly."[67]

Trendle's troubles, however, were not merely the result of the Green Hornet formula's uncomfortable fit with other television genres of the era; they resulted from his unwillingness to adapt his business formula to other programming and production patterns emerging in television during the 1950s. While TCM was willing to tweak the Green Hornet formula, it was not willing or able to change its marketing strategies or financial arrangements to meet changes in the TV industry. The next section explores television's changing production context from the early-to-late-1950s, and will position both Trendle's business model in opposition to dominant modes of operation and Trendle's business philosophy as an "independent" in opposition to the prevailing roles for independent producers that would emerge by decades end.

LOSING "INDEPENDENCE"

Mark Alvey has described late 1950s television as "a period of

stabilization, setting the stage for the stasis - both industrial and creative of the 1960s."[68] For independent producers, however, practically the entire decade was one of transition from relative autonomy to what Thomas Schatz has characterized as "subcontractor status."[69] The opportunities afforded to "self-contained firms" -- independent producers like Ziv who financed their own telefilm productions and distributed their products under their own corporate banners[70] -- to sell series directly to sponsors (whether local or national), and to access the first-run syndication market by selling series directly to local stations, dwindled after 1952 and almost disappeared entirely by the early 1960s. As late as 1956, there were still 30-odd syndicated shows on television during prime time hours. By 1963, there were only three such series. As Schatz explains, "In 1960, all three networks... pressured affiliates to accept their full prime-time schedules, which forced the first-run syndication series out of mainstream production."[71] What happened?

The FCC freeze ended in late 1952, which lifted the four-year ban on issuing new station licenses. By 1955, the number of television stations quadrupled from 108 to over 400, while the percentage of American homes with at least one television set climbed rapidly from 12 percent in 1950, to 67 percent in 1955, to 83 percent by January1958.[72] Along with

this multiplication of television stations and viewers came increased financial stakes for those involved in television production up to this point, namely the producers, sponsors, ad agencies, and networks. Production costs rose as networks clamored to acquire affiliate stations in newly opened markets by offering better "quality" television. As costs rose, single sponsors found it more and more difficult to cover the entire cost of series production, leading to the gradual integration of the multiple-sponsor system throughout the decade. With this shift, sponsor authority diminished and advertising agencies, which had been so heavily involved in radio production, ceded their roles in the programming process.[73]

Though TCM usurped the role played by the advertising agency in the production of *The Lone Ranger*, *Sergeant Preston*, and *Green Hornet* radio series, the licensor's understanding of series production was still deeply rooted in the radio production model. TCM continued to advocate for a single sponsor to assume the full cost of producing a *Green Hornet* series and place it on a network long after this system had become obsolete. Even when TCM was willing to consider alternative models of financing, these models all involved a sponsor putting up some percentage of the production cost as an advance and reimbursement upon the delivery of a rough cut of each episode, not after the series had entered into

syndication.[74] With the shift from sponsor-produced programming to magazine-format advertising, it was virtually impossible to find a sponsor who would pay the cost of shooting a pilot, let alone a series. In 1961, responding to Desilu's Warren Lewis' suggested terms of sale for a *Green Hornet* television series, Trendle elaborated in great detail on his previous arrangement with Jack Chertok and General Mills for *The Lone Ranger* TV series. He stated, "as I see the situation, our main trouble is a sponsor. If I have a sponsor, I can get the product financed and made without any difficulty."[75] While such arrangements were feasible in the early 1950s, Trendle continued to insist upon some variation thereof well into the early 1960s.

Beyond the single-sponsor model, TCM continued to follow the recycling strategies it had employed successfully in promoting its brands throughout the late 1930s and 1940s, This was most apparent when it came to the use of the 1952 *Green Hornet* television pilot, which was still in circulation as late as 1960. Despite repeated suggestions that the licensor film another pilot, TCM remained resolute that this was unnecessary when dealing with a proven product such the Green Hornet and an established and experienced production team such as themselves.[76] In fact, TCM regularly marketed its prior experiences with *The Lone*

Ranger and *Sergeant Preston of the Yukon* as all the proof necessary to ensure that *The Green Hornet* would make a successful television series. In 1954, a promotional packet for *The Green Hornet* pilot stated, "you - the advertiser - are prone to look for tested programs, established name franchises, and skilled, well capitalized offices to assist in your marketing problems as well as the mechanics of good show production... confidence and assurance are what you demand. That is our business."[77] The same rhetorical logic was still being used in 1957. "I have always had the distinct feeling that a pilot film is a great thing to have, when one does not know the producing company and the show is something that has never been on radio and is an unknown quantity... You know I did make 180 Lone Ranger television shows and 78 Sergeant Preston of the Yukon shows... The ratings speak for themselves. The Hornet shows would be produced and handled by the same people."[78] Even in 1959, Trendle resisted shooting a new pilot: "We... feel that our reputation should not make it necessary for us to make a half dozen pilots of each film to convince a prospective advertiser that we know what we are doing."[79]

The recycling strategies that had succeeded for TCM in the past were out of step with the currency of "newness" that pervaded the television market in the late 1950s. As Bernard L. Schubert of the

Schubert Talent Agency warned Trendle in 1959, “In this business people are inclined to evaluate ideas on the basis of the year that it was submitted to them...the Madison Avenue mentality is such that to re-submit a show that’s been around, or was submitted some years ago, would only result in coloring any future decisions made on the series.”[80] It is tempting to conclude that Trendle fundamentally misunderstood the direction broadcasting was heading. As late as 1959, Trendle was still hopeful that the golden age radio formats that had launched *The Lone Ranger* and *The Green Hornet* would soon return.[81] Yet, such a conclusion ignores how new models of conducting business in the emergent classical network era favored the networks and larger Hollywood studios over the independent producers and licensors.

At the end of the day, Trendle’s refusal to shoot a new pilot despite all warnings to the contrary was likely a financial decision. Whereas General Mills had paid the cost of production for the Lone Ranger pilot (and all 180 episodes filmed), TCM had financed the Green Hornet out of pocket. The licensor simply could not afford to shoot another pilot without guarantee of having the series picked up.[82] Even by the mid 1950s, with the entrance of the major Hollywood studios into series production and the consolidation of network power over sponsors and advertising agencies,

production costs for pilots were increasing dramatically and the number of pilots selected by networks for series production reflected only a fraction of those actually produced. Whereas the cost of the 1951 *Green Hornet* pilot might have been too high for the first-run syndication market, by mid decade productions costs per episode could easily exceed five times the $28,000 TCM paid.

Independent producers found themselves in need of a new strategy, as the single-sponsor system was gradually phased out, the direct syndication route was blocked, and the expectations of networks and audiences alike for telefilm series were raised by the expensive productions coming out of the Hollywood studio back lots, Many independents simply disappeared but others, like Desilu which produced *I Love Lucy*, remained - and even thrived - though at a great loss of their previous autonomy. Desilu and other independents survived because they diversified and accepted reduced creative authority over their productions by entering into "participation sponsorship" arrangements with the networks that made the latter de facto co-owners of Desilu's properties. Many independent producers were one-shot companies, focused on creating a single telefilm series and selling it to a national sponsor to place on a network or syndicating the product to local affiliates. Desilu quickly

recognized the importance of expanding its production repertoire to multiple series and genres and the value of retaining the rerun rights to their productions. Early on, Desilu negotiated to retain the syndication rights to *I Love Lucy*, eventually selling those back to CBS in 1955 for $4,500,000. The independent also produced other pre-sold properties like *Our Miss Brooks* (1952- 1956) and *December Bride* (1954-1959), both popular radio comedies for which Desilu bought the rights. Desilu convinced CBS to program *December Bride* immediately after *I Love Lucy* on Mondays at 9:30PM, guaranteeing the latter series a strong lead-in audience. The company also diversified into other genres, producing, for example, the western *The Adventures of Jim Bowie* (1956-1958) and the crime drama *The Untouchables* (1958-1963). Desilu purchased RKO studios in 1957, primarily for its back lot, in order to accommodate these expansions. By 1959, even with its fortunes beginning to decline, Desilu was still producing upwards of 25 series for network television.[83]

Having sold off its most successful properties by the mid 1950s, TCM seemed to be moving in the opposite direction of Desilu's diversification efforts. Moreover, after the cancellation of *The Green Hornet* radio series in 1952, TCM abandoned its only direct link to series production, exclusively devoting its attention to licensing the brand.

Without access to production facilities or revenue from its other properties to fall back on, TCM could ill-afford to absorb the cost of financing a *Green Hornet* television series on its own. Yet, without a television series to generate exposure for the Green Hornet brand, TCM could not rustle up interest among other potential licensees. Ironically, TCM's exclusive focus on licensing actually hurt its merchandising efforts. The company's failure to diversify into either television production or distribution, or to retain the rights to its more lucrative properties, compounded its struggles to extend the Green Hornet brand, whereas Desilu was able to use profits from the sale of *I Love Lucy* reruns to finance new projects.

Desilu's ability to produce so much product for the networks was contingent upon new types of production relationships with them. The cost of series production required a company to engage in "deficit financing" practices in order to see profits. Deficit financing refers to the practice of producing a series at a loss and waiting for off-network syndication to recoup on one's investment. Very few producers outside of the major Hollywood studios could afford to do this. The studios managed because they could defray costs from feature film revenue or by loaning out their production facilities.[84] Desilu's multiple on-going productions also allowed it to take revenue from one series and invest it in another. More

common were new forms of co-partnerships with the networks, which would invest in the production of a pilot or a series in exchange for retaining a share of the distribution, syndication, and merchandising rights, in addition to profits gleaned from advertising revenue.[85] Network investment often only covered a fraction of the actual cost of production, but their ownership rights often reached 50 percent. In so doing, independent producers not only sacrificed part of their profits, but a good deal of their creative authority, as networks increasingly became involved in production decisions or dictated what types of programming might be worthy of their investment. Whereas previously there had been hundreds of potential sponsors to strike production deals with, now there were only three options. Networks demanded more control over production, partial ownership over product, and lower sales prices. All this made it increasingly difficult for independents to survive.[86] Those that did were often independent in name only, functioning as de facto production arms for the networks or by employing similarly unfair business practices to squeeze out independents even smaller than themselves. As Schatz argues, even "Desilu's autonomy and authority - its so-called 'independence' - steadily diminished as the economic stakes rose and the networks consolidated their control over the TV industry."[87]

In fact, the networks greatly desired that independent producers remain active yet contained within the television production system. Independent producers allowed the networks to deflect accusations of monopolistic practices that had befallen the film industry in the 1940s. Independent productions also greatly reduced the risk of investing in a failed series. Co-financing multiple pilots at a fraction of their actual cost and then choosing the best ones to proceed with ensured the networks a wide array of choices for only a minimal investment.[88]

While TCM's business model drew on the single-sponsor system that was popular on radio, in many ways what the licensor actually sought for itself was the exact arrangement the networks managed to put in place by the early 1960s. TCM wanted a situation in which the licensor retained ownership of the product, had complete script and casting approval, and supervised the production, but made virtually no financial investment that might prove financially risky. This agreement had made sense when TCM's managerial authority was extended beyond one medium across a vast inter-text of products bearing its brands. At its height, TCM essentially was the central node of a trans-mediated network, selecting the most appropriate licensees for its brands, while investing no more than the cost of promotional materials in order to keep its properties

in the eyes of potential sponsors and manufacturers. By the end of the 1950s, the networks not only were performing this supervisory role in-house, but also were involved in inter-textual management. ABC opened up its own licensing and merchandising division in 1957. The other networks quickly followed suit. Network co-financing arrangements often involved securing the merchandising rights to series they help develop.

Those independents still operating on the margins by the early 1960s competed with one another for an increasingly smaller piece of the TV pie. Moreover, they often were pressed into dubious partnership arrangements with each other, in which more entrenched independents sought to exploit their smaller counterparts the ways the networks, themselves, exploited them. Thus, it is not so much that TCM found itself in the position of having no takers for the Green Hornet property , but that the offers they did receive were often from parties who demanded a great deal of control and/or rights without guarantees that they could produce any results. Whereas the networks were willing to invest in a pilot in exchange for 50 percent ownership of a series, [89] independent production companies like Larry Harmon Pictures, producers of the *Bozo the Clown* cartoon series, and Desilu were willing to raise the money to produce a series but offered TCM only a small royalty on the net profits they might

earn if a series were to be produced.[90] In exchange, these independents sought to tie up the exclusive rights to *The Green Hornet* for up to two years, own the merchandising and commercial tie-up rights to the property (for which they would also pay TCM a percentage of the gross sums received), and extend these exclusive rights into perpetuity so long as they paid TCM a nominal amount. Harmon's offer included the right for TCM to cancel his contract after eight years if the payment he received was less than $3000 and, even then, Harmon would retain non-exclusive rights to continue to exploit the episodes produced and related merchandise and commercial tie-ups.[91]

Trendle expressed confusion over these stipulations. He responded to Desilu's Lewis, "your sample contract... is so very different from anything I have ever seen, I cannot quite accustom myself to this type of a deal."[92] His objections included the tie-ing up of *The Green Hornet* on an exclusive basis for such a lengthy time period without a guaranteed sponsor and/or network deal, which meant that all the producer promised was that episodes would be filmed, and nothing else. Trendle also objected to the paltry percentage he would earn as the brand's owner as well as the amount of time it would take for him to see payment (if any were to arrive), since he estimated that it would take several years for the series to

amass $100,000 in net profits.[93]

His greatest reservation, however, lay in his managerial authority being usurped by the production company. His response to Lewis repeated at various points that all aspects of exploiting his previous properties were "subject to my approval."[94] In a letter to Mortimer Becker of Becker & London, Trendle expressed his frustration over the type of offer being made on his property. "We turn the product over to you and you may kill it or make saleable feature out of it at your discretion and that we cannot grant. Any product that we control will be supervised by us; the scripts will be approved by us, as well as the leads, and we shall exercise sufficient supervision to know that our product's value is not being destroyed."[95]

Trendle's demands for the same managerial oversight that he previously had enjoyed were now seen as unrealistic by prospective producers, who assumed they should have complete creative and merchandising authority as a condition for putting up the capital for the production. Trendle's mode of property management was out of step with the pace independent producers followed during this transitional period. Trendle's unwillingness to loosen the reigns, however, was not a mere matter of stubbornness. As has been argued throughout this project, the

licensor's very identity and function had been defined by his ability to manage the movements of the intangible properties he owned, grounding them both economically and culturally within value systems favored by corporate capitalism and, not coincidentally, also financially rewarding to his company. As such, management was an essential part of the licensing process. Yet, by the early 1960s, Trendle was no longer in a position to make these demands legitimately. Increasingly, this type of managerial authority was possible only within diversified media producing corporations like Desilu or Warner Bros. (and even their authority was constrained), or within the networks themselves.

CONCLUSION

Heading into the 1950s, TCM had a proven track record of extending its brands across media. *The Lone Ranger* and *Sergeant Preston of the Yukon* were both phenomenally successful on radio and television. *The Green Hornet* had been on radio for many years with an established listening audience. Early television borrowed heavily from radio's pre-sold programming. Moreover, the crime drama would be one of the most successful genres on 1950s television. Independent producers would also continue to play an important role in series production throughout the

decade. Yet, despite the apparent opportunities available throughout the 1950s for TCM to extend the Green Hornet brand into television, the licensor repeatedly failed to do so.

TCM's difficulties came from both the incompatibility of the Green Hornet formula with the generic conventions of the 1950s crime drama and the obsolescence of the licensor's business model for extending the Green Hornet brand. Crime dramas in the 1950s, particularly the cheaply produced telefilm variety, relied heavily on claims of "documentary realism" in their promotional rhetoric. Many crime shows adapted the "true" stories of real law enforcement officers or crimes. TCM's efforts to align the Green Hornet formula with this model failed because the character's costumed identity and gadgetry diminished the brand's claim to realistically depict crime. Despite the licensor's persistent claims that the Green Hornet was an adult property (or could be made into one with very little effort), TCM remained unable to convince TV networks and sponsors of this. Unfortunately, even as the crime drama's semi-documentary conventions waned by the end of the decade, TCM refused to play up the formulas eccentricities, continuing to take the Green Hornet very seriously.

TCM also tried to compare a *Green Hornet* TV series with the

emerging adult westerns of the mid-1950s. While somewhat opportunistic, TCM's comparisons between *The Green Hornet* and *Gunsmoke* demonstrated the fluidity with which the licensor transferred the repackaged formula across genres. The Green Hornet formula was originally an updated and modernized variation on the Lone Ranger's and TCM had little trouble comparing the Green Hornet brand with other westerns on TV. TCM failed to take into account, however, that adult western, because of its historical setting, allowed for an exploration of contemporary social issues that could be resolved in relatively formulaic ways without seeming trite. The Green Hornet's formula called for a black and white moral universe that seemed simplistic because of its contemporary setting.

TCM's willingness to innovate on the Green Hornet formula was often accompanied by an intransigence toward changing its business model. Even as the licensor pitched a potential *Green Hornet* TV series as modern and "torn from contemporary headlines," it continued to circulate an outdated television pilot and rely on its past accomplishments as a rhetorical selling strategy meant to justify industry trust in their brand and in themselves as brand managers. Failure to meet repeated requests for an updated pilot hampered TCM's ability to sell the Green Hornet property.

Changing production conditions throughout the 1950s repositioned "independents" as sub-contractors to the networks. Rising production costs and the erosion of the first-run syndication market forced many independent producers out of business. While some companies like Desilu flourished, their success required elaborate and diversified operations and came at the expense of diminished autonomy and creative authority. By 1954, TCM had sold off the rights to its most profitable brand, the Lone Ranger, and by 1957, Sergeant Preston as well. Moreover, as live series radio production came to a halt by mid-decade, TCM's last hold on any direct control over programming vanished. TCM faced a culture of dwindling independent producers, the near-eradication of single sponsors, and increased network leverage. Any arrangement TCM considered now required the licensor to accept less money, offered fewer guarantees of success and, most importantly, demanded that it relinquish its managerial authority over its property. TCM was particularly unwilling to abandon the managerial authority it had commanded throughout the 1940s and early 1950s. TCM regularly rejected production opportunities for a *Green Hornet* TV series precisely because producers demanded strict control over exploiting the brand in exchange for putting up the financing. While other independents were willing to readjust their operations to

accommodate the emerging production climate, TCM's identity remained too steeped in its autonomous control over its brands to fall in line. Even Desilu's power would dissipate as the network hegemony took hold in the early 1960s, though they were able to hold out and remain productive somewhat longer than TCM

Though Trendle would continue to pursue a television deal for *The Green Hornet* and would eventually succeed, his authority and value as an independent licensor was becoming obsolete. The practices and values Trendle championed were not vanishing entirely (though some were). By the mid 1960s, however, they were increasingly being absorbed back into larger and more diversified media/corporate entities that preferred in-house licensing and merchandising over their independently contracted equivalents. Companies like MCA-Universal, which formed in 1962, and was the first of the 'modern' conglomerates, and Time-Warner, which was gradually organized throughout the mid-to-late 1960s as the Kinney Corporation bought out both National Press Periodicals in 1966 and Warner Bros., in 1969, began usurping the power and "authority" that had been so important to Trendle's earlier success. By the mid-1960s, the viability of the 'independent licensor' model was, quite simply, over, even if Trendle did not quite realize this yet.

[1] In fact, William Boddy refers to the early 1950s as the "Golden Age of first-run syndication." See William Boddy, Fifties Television (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 2.
[2] In a 1959 letter to Cliff Samuelson at General Mills, Trendle confides that Meurer was no longer actively connected with the company and Campbell was seriously considering pursuing independent projects as well. TLS, Trendle to Samuelson, January 19, 1959.
[3] See TLS, Trendle to Lee Bland; Leo Burnett Co., Inc., March 20, 1958; TLS, Trendle to Clifford Samuelson; General Mills, Inc., January 19, 1959.
[4] Bradford Wright, Comic book nation: the transformation of youth culture in America (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 155.
[5] TLS, Alfred Harvey to Trendle, March 17, 1947.
[6] TLS, Trendle to Alfred Harvey, November 19, 1947.
[7] TLS, Smith to Meurer, March 2,1953.
[8] TLS, Harvey to Trendle, January 21, 1948.
[9] TLS, ABC Inc., to Green Hornet Inc., August 12, 1948.
[10] TLS, Trendle to Muriel Durand, ABC Standards and Practices, September 20, 1948.
[11] Memo, Trendle to Meurer, October 12, 1951 and sample publicity letter from MBS to local affiliate stations, October 23, 1951.
[12] Signed contract between Green Hornet, Inc., Orange-Crush Co., and Fitzmorris and Miller Advertising, October 26, 1952.
[13] Excerpts of Orange-Crush salesmen responding to the Green Hornet radio series supplied to TCM by Fitzmorris and Miller Advertising, December 17, 1951. Signed contract between Green Hornet, Inc., Orange-Crush Co., and Fitzmorris and Miller Advertising, May 5, 1952.
[14] TLS, Fitzmorris to Trendle, June 4, 1952 and TLS, Trendle to Fitzmorris, September 19, 1952.
[15] See Christopher Anderson, Hollywood TV: The Studio System in the 1950s (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994), 56-57; Michele Hilmes, Hollywood and Broadcasting: From Radio to Cable (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 150-151; Michael Kackman, "The Making of an Icon: *Hopalong Cassidy*, William Boyd Productions and

Early Television's Transnational Transmedia Texts" in Draft Copy (2006), 5.
[16] Ibid.
[17] TLS, Trendle to Adolph Schimmel, Universal Pictures Corporation, December 21, 1950.
[18] TLS, Trendle to Schimmel, January 31, 1951.
[19] Mark Alvey, "The Independents: Rethinking the Television Studio System," in Television: The Critical View, ed. Horace Newcomb (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), Sixth edition, 36.
[20] Thomas Schatz, "Desilu, *I Love Lucy*, and the Rise of Network TV," in Making Television: Authorship and the Production Process, ed. Robert J. Thompson and Gary Burns (New York: Praeger, 1990), 127.
[21] At least, according to Schubert, who encouraged Trendle to pursue a network deal with a new pilot because the networks were more interested in cultivating family audiences. TLS, Schubert to Trendle, December 10, 1959.
[22] Memo, Trendle to Meurer, October 24, 1951.
[23] TLS, Victor Elting, The Quaker Oats Company to Trendle. May 21, 1957. Elting was responding to Trendle's inquiry about Quaker Oats sponsoring a Green Hornet TV series as it had Sergeant Preston. Elting informed Trendle that his company was "after a show with a track record and are not, therefore, inclined to any purchase of speculative rating."
[24] TLS Chertok to Green Hornet, Inc., November 13, 1951.
[25] Michael Kackman, Citizen Spy: Television, Espionage, and Cold War Culture (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 30.
[26] Schatz, 121.
[27] Exact figures of what individual episodes for a *Green Hornet* series would cost are not available, though they might have been cheaper than the pilot.
[28] Kackman (2005), 26.
[29] Ibid, 2-5.
[30] Ibid, 3.
[31] The Green Hornet was definitely not the only trade property to undergo this type of transformation. As Bradford Wright has shown, both the Batman and Superman properties had been reconfigured as super-police agents rather than social reformers by the early 1940s. In fact, it is possible that TCM's unwillingness to alter their formula until 1948 might have contributed to their difficulties in keeping sponsors for the radio

program or making a TV deal. Wright, 30-37.
[32] Promotional copy draft for Orange-Crush radio sponsorship, circa 1952, describes the character as "civic corruption investigator." The synopses of the 1952 Green Hornet television pilot, titled "Waterfront Beat" describes the Green Hornet's efforts to expose a notorious racketeer who has seized control of the dock unions and is backed by Communists. In this manner, labor organizations (and other groups who questioned the status quo) were easily labeled Communists and lumped together within a containment policy that enforced domestic conformity as a defense against the spread of Communism abroad. Pilot Synopses, circa 1952.
[33] TLS, Trendle to Leon Harvey, February 17, 1948.
[34] Promotional copy draft for Orange-Crush radio sponsorship, circa 1952.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Wright, 155.
[37] Ibid, 142-144.
[38] Ibid, 156.
[39] TLS, Harvey to Trendle, January 21, 1948.
[40] TLS, Trendle to Harvey, January 23, 1948.
[41] TLS, Trendle to Harvey, October 12, 1948.
[42] Wright, 157-172.
[43] Quoted in Brown, New York Times, June 13, 1954.
[44] These complaints against the comic book industry would lead to self-regulation that squeezed many true-crime and horror titles (and their publishers) out in favor of children's books and superheroes (now fighting increasingly unreal supervillains). Faced with the threat of regulation, the comic book industry created the Comics Magazine Association of America (CMAA), whose function was to enforce a code of standards that would reverse the negative public opinion comic books had received. Within two years, eighteen publishers went out of business and nearly 350 titles were cancelled, including all horror and crime comics. The comic code effectively defined comic books as targeting a pre-adolescent audience just as teenagers were being recognized as an important market by the other cultural industries. Wright, 179.
[45] TLS, Trendle to Meyer, October 27, 1952.
[46] TLS, Trendle to E. G. Eisenmenger, Leo Burnett Company, Inc., May 13, 1958.
[47] In a 1958 letter to Leonard H. Goldenson where Trendle laid out his reasons why the Green Hornet could be an adult series, he quoted radio

statistics that dated as far back as 1941 as his prime evidence. TLS, Trendle to Leonard H. Goldenson, American Broadcasting- Paramount Theatres, Inc., December 5, 1958. Similarly, the 1954 promotional packet TCM prepared to promote the Green Hornet TV pilot quoted similarly outdated statistics, these dating back to the 1937 Golden Jersey Milk premium giveaway numbers, but conveniently omitted the years they corresponded to. Green Hornet Promotional Packet, June 30, 1954.

[48] See TLS, Trendle to Leonard H. Goldenson, American Broadcasting-Paramount Theatres, Inc., December 5, 1958 AND TLS, Trendle to Leo Bland, Leo Burnett Co., Inc., February 13, 1959 for examples.

[49] TLS, Trendle to Leo Bland, Leo Burnett Co., Inc., February 13, 1959.

[50] TLS, Trendle to Goldenson, December 5, 1958.

[51] TLS, Trendle to John Goetz, July 13, 1959.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Kackman (2005), 5.

[54] TLS, Trendle to Leo Bland, Leo Burnett, Inc., February 4, 1957.

[55] Kackman (2005), 50.

[56] Anderson, 241.

[57] Ibid, 4, 10.

[58] Ibid, 168.

[59] Schatz, 128.

[60] Ibid, 203.

[61] TLS, Trendle to Cox, March 22, 1957 AND TLS, Trendle to Samuelson, January 19, 1959.

[62] See TLS, Trendle to Leonard H. Goldenson, American Broadcasting-Paramount Theatres, Inc., December 5, 1958 AND TLS, Trendle to Thomas W. Moore, American Broadcasting Company, January 5, 1959 for examples.

[63] Anderson, 269.

[64] As Anderson suggests, what constituted the adult western was defined almost exclusively by industry and critic discourse. See Anderson, 203-205.

[65] Many of Trendle's efforts to sell the Green Hornet as an adult series contain defensive justifications of why it is not a juvenile program, which clearly suggests that this was a consistent concern. See TLS, Trendle to E. G. Eisenmenger, Leo Burnett Company, Inc., May 13, 1958; TLS, Trendle to Thomas W. Moore, American Broadcasting Company, January 5, 1959 AND TLS, Trendle to Leo Bland, Leo Burnett Co., Inc., February 13,

1959 for examples.
[66] See TLS, Trendle to Lee Bland, February 2, 1959, in which Trendle quotes an article in *Sponsor Magazine* making this exact point in order to try and convince the Leo Burnett agency to consider the Green Hornet as a possible television series.
[67] TLS, Trendle to Thomas W. Moore, American Broadcasting Company, January 5, 1959.
[68] Alvey, 34.
[69] Schatz, 132.
[70] Alvey, 38.
[71] Schatz, 132.
[72] Ibid, 125.
[73] Ibid, 125, 132.
[74] Information culled from document titled "Suggested Financial Arrangements in Re-Sale of The Green Hornet Program to a Sponsor in Order of the Best Deals for Us," circa 1952.
[75] See TLS, Trendle to Warren Lewis, Desilu Studios, October 20, 1961 for example. In response to Lewis' suggested terms of sale for a Green Hornet television series, Trendle elaborates in great detail his previous arrangement with Jack Chertok and General Mills for the Lone Ranger TV series, before stating, "as I see the situation, our main trouble is a sponsor. If I have a sponsor, I can get the product financed and made without any difficulty."
[76] Trendle responded in this manner to Lee Bland's suggestion that TCM shoot a new pilot for the 1957-58 television series. In 1958, The William Morris Agency expressed concern that the pilot had been seen in too many places to sell the series. In 1959, Bernard L. Schubert strenuously advised Trendle to shoot a new pilot or else "we do not see how we could anything with the property under the existing conditions." See TLS, Trendle to Bland, December 20, 1957; TLS, Wallace S. Jordan, William Morris Agency to Trendle, September 5, 1958 AND TLS, Schubert to Trendle, December 10, 1959.
[77] Green Hornet Promotional Packet, June 30, 1954.
[78] TLS, Trendle to Bland, December 20, 1957.
[79] TLS, Trendle to Marvin Kirsch, Radio Daily, December 21, 1959.
[80] TLS, Schubert to Trendle, December 10, 1959.
[81] TLS, Trendle to Ronald Dawson, November 18, 1959. Trendle writes, "we have been patiently waiting to find someone interested in going back

to dramatic shows on radio because we think that in that there would be a big future for 'The Green Hornet'." Dawson had written to Trendle about the possibility of compiling Green Hornet programs on cassette and selling them as nostalgia.

[82] Trendle nearly admits as much to Bland when he writes, "I have the feeling that the making of a new pilot, at an expense of about $50,000 is not the answer to the problem." TLS, Trendle to Bland, December 20, 1957.

[83] Schatz, 121, 127, 130, 131.

[84] Ibid, 129.

[85] Alvey, 37.

[86] See Alvey, 36-37.

[87] Schatz, 118.

[88] Alvey, 37.

[89] Trendle tells Meurer that such arrangements, while common practice, were not financially worthwhile to pursue. TLS, Trendle to Meurer, January 22, 1962.

[90] Net profits are monies left over after all expenses and overhead has been taken out. Harmon offers Trendle 10 percent of the first $100,000 of net profits and 15 percent after that. TLS, Harmon to Trendle, February 10, 1961. Lewis made Trendle a similar offer. TLS, Trendle to Lewis, October 20, 1961.

[91] TLS, Harmon to Trendle, February 10, 1961.

[92] TLS, Trendle to Lewis, October 20, 1961.

[93] These objections are listed numerically in a letter specifically addressed to Harmon, but are also expressed in his rejection of Lewis' offer. TLS, Trendle to Harmon, February 22, 1961 AND TLS, Trendle to Lewis, October 20, 1961.

[94] TLS, Trendle to Lewis, October 20, 1961.

[95] TLS, Trendle to Becker, December 19, 1961.

Chapter Six: Introduction

In 1964, America went 007 crazy. One year later, Batmania swept the land. The James Bond movie franchise and the William Dozier produced *Batman* television series were both hip variations on long-established popular genres, the spy thriller and the superhero adventure series; the latter was a campy television retelling of an already existing and proven commodity, the *Batman* comic book. Both texts were also licensing phenomena, generating nearly $130,000,000 in merchandising sales between them in 1964-65 alone. *Batman* also played an important role in reviving institutional memory and nostalgia for "forgotten" brands like the Green Hornet, which were now seen as prime properties for revision and repackaging as modern merchandising machines. As early as 1957, ABC-TV operated its own merchandising department and by the mid-1960s, all three networks as well as the major Hollywood studios were heavily invested in the merchandising possibilities of any series they produced. In 1965, Dozier's Greenaway Productions, in partnership with 20th Century Fox licensed the television and merchandising rights to *The Green Hornet*. ABC, which also broadcast the *Batman* series, bought sixteen episodes before a pilot script was even developed, along with the

merchandising rights, which they sub-licensed from Greenaway and Fox. Trendle's much-delayed hopes of landing a TV series for his remaining property were on the verge of being fulfilled. One year later though, the series would be cancelled after only 26 episodes, disappointing ratings, and poor product sales, effectively ending the property's checkered trans-mediated career for good. What happened?

There are many explanations for why *The Green Hornet* series failed, including poor writing, an over-reliance by ABC on national Nielsen ratings instead of urban population measurements (the series rated much higher when only the top-30 urban markets were considered, but did poorly when rural communities were counted), and, ironically, a desire by Dozier not to ape his own prior success with *Batman* by giving *The Green Hornet* the same camp treatment (which is the opposite of what ABC likely expected when they purchased the series). There was also a miscalculation and misrepresentation of the property's prior appeal. The Green Hornet had never achieved the same type of national exposure or merchandising success as the Lone Ranger or Batman. In this chapter, I argue that Dozier/ABC-TV's and Trendle's competing memories of the Green Hornet's value played an integral part in the muddled production of the television series and its related merchandising campaign.

John Bodnar and Barbie Zelizer are careful to distinguish between history and memory, asserting that the latter is always a selective and malleable interpretation of actual past events.[1] While most analyses of memory and television have either focused on textual representations of history or on audience recollections of particular televised programs or events, it is also important to consider how memories are strategically and selectively employed within the cultural industries at the production level and in the very selection processes of what products to produce. In other words, memory is not merely a product convention, but a production convention as well. Moreover, as Steve Anderson reminds, "Memory, like history, is best understood as a site of discursive struggle."[2] Different people working on the same production will bring different memories to bear on the product (whether of past production experiences or past experiences of the product itself) and these competing memories will shape the end result. Both Dozier and Trendle looked back on the 1930s *Green Hornet* radio series to justify their claims, each remembering quite differently the reasons for its success, while each also forgetting that *The Green Hornet* radio series had never really been successful. Licensors like Trendle, whose livelihood was staked on his ability to recycle past success stories with his brands, had selective memory strategies ingrained into the

very promotional practices he employed. Yet, Trendle's memories also were shaped by the particular civic and moral values that had informed the creation of his brand formulas during the Depression and postwar era. Trendle believed that the Green Hornet's ability to teach viewers about civic duty and police work were at the core of its appeal. In contrast, Dozier and ABC-TV saw the gadgetry (the gas gun, the car) and adventure built into the Green Hornet formula as central to the brand's historical ability to generate merchandising opportunities, which now might be renewed.

While both the Bond and Batman properties relied on the popular (and pre-sold) personalities of their protagonists to appeal to consumers, both were also clear examples of the turn within the cultural industries toward merchandise-driven content, with an emphasis on gimmicks and gadgets that could be quickly converted into toys (for both children and adults). To be certain, the recognition that unique personalities could sell the very products they used as part of their adventures was not new. As early as 1933, Trendle had stressed that the Lone Ranger shoot silver bullets as a way of generating premiums.[3] Trendle had believed that it was the Lone Ranger, Green Hornet, and Sergeant Preston personalities that inevitably made these products appealing - that the gadgets were

outgrowths of the characters - and thus insisted on the significance of logical continuity between his characters and their devices; the James Bond films and *Batman* television series were purposely designed to introduce regularly (to the point of being formulaic) new gadgets that their heroes could use (and thus brand) in order to generate new merchandising possibilities at every turn.

Trendle's insistence that the Green Hornet remain continuous with its 1940s characterization and plotting was at odds with Dozier's desire to introduce new gadgets and a wider variety of villains into the series. Trendle's and Dozier's conceptualizations of how to "modernize" the property also differed significantly, and Trendle repeatedly threatened to invoke his contractual right to script approval and voiced strong opposition to the changes Dozier sought to make. Trendle also remained intransigent about the audience for the series, adamantly (and selectively) remembering it as an adult property, despite Dozier's and ABC's need to appeal to younger viewers watching at 7:30PM. These tensions, which revolved around Dozier's and Trendle's different understandings of the property's value, had a real impact on both the tonal consistency of the series and its ability to generate merchandising possibilities for ABC. Inevitably, it was this new in-house intersection between network

programming and merchandising that both initially renewed interest in the Green Hornet property and finally spelled its demise.

By the mid-1960s, many of the practices and strategies that independent licensors had developed over the past thirty years were being reproduced within the increasingly diversified and integrated network television system that controlled production, distribution, and exhibition outlets and that operated sophisticated licensing and merchandising operations tied directly into these vertically integrated operations. Other cultural producers were also beginning to recognize the primary value of established properties as merchandising outlets, as evidenced by National Press Periodicals' (NPP), publishers of DC Comics and owners of the Superman and Batman brands, purchase of the Licensing Corporation of America (LCA) in 1965. In 1966, NPP would be purchased by the Kinney Corporation, which would further integrate and diversify its media conglomerate empire by acquiring in 1969 Warner Bros. Studios, a leading television producer and established motion picture studio, and Time-Life Publishing in 1972. Time-Warner joined MCA-Universal, which had officially merged in 1962, as one of the first major media conglomerates. Brand licensing and cross-promotion of commercial intertexts would become increasingly important to Time-Warner's

business model.

All that remained was the elimination of lingering independent licensors like Trendle, whose outmoded cultural values now interfered with the brand exploitation strategies they had shepherded. Not only did financial operations in the classical network era make it virtually impossible for independent licensors to profit from their properties, but the networks justified their increased creative control on the logic that competing ideas (especially from "outsiders") interfered with the smooth management of cross-merchandized and trans-mediated brands. While *The Green Hornet* television series was a failure for many reasons, the fact that Trendle's meddling was singled out as the central cause by both Dozier and the networks is key to understanding the direction the cultural industries were heading.

THE CLASSICAL NETWORK ERA

The mid-1960s to the mid-1970s are considered by many to be one of the most socially challenging eras in contemporary American history, as various marginalized and disaffected groups, including African-Americans, women, homosexuals, anti-war protestors, and other counter-culture enthusiasts, publicly resisted the containment logics of the 1950s.

By 1965, the year *Batman* debuted on national television, the Black Power Movement was in full swing, growing more militant following the assassination of Malcolm X that same year. The Watts riots erupted in Los Angeles in response to perceived police brutality against the African American community. The 1969 Stonewall riot shined a public light on the gay community's struggle against discrimination, which had for decades been rendered invisible. Betty Friedan wrote *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963, challenging the patriarchal hierarchy that forced women into subordinate roles as mothers and housewives, and in 1966, Friedan helped launch the National Organization for Women (NOW), which quickly grew to 48,000 members by 1974. Draft-eligible college students began protesting the Vietnam War as early as 1964, while the counter-culture also found a home on college campuses, advocating against materialist, militaristic, and repressive values.

For most of the 1960s, however, these struggles were largely absent from network television. They did find expression in Hollywood films and alternative media catering to the youth culture's more politicized sensibilities. Hollywood seized upon this youth market in response to declining box-office revenues from traditional genre films, but, as Tom Schatz has argued, the Hollywood art-cinema wave, led by Francis Ford-

Coppola, Robert Altman, Sam Peckinpah, Stanley Kuberick, Arthur Penn, and Mike Nichols would be short-lived and eclipsed by the blockbuster and branding logics of the New Hollywood.[4] Already in 1964, the James Bond franchise was pointing to a more viable profit model for the studios.

Television was also interested in attracting the youth market, but the general boon experienced by the three networks during the height of the classical network era, also made them reluctant to fully abandon already successful programs and programming formulas. By 1965, the three networks either owned or shared in the profits for 91 percent of all prime-time programming. They also earned significant revenue from syndication rights and residuals. While rarely mentioned in most histories of this era, all three networks also operated their own licensing and merchandising divisions, earning significant profit from commercial tie-ins to successful programs. Since the networks did not pay the full cost of series production, the Hollywood studios were practically the only players in the market who could afford to wait for syndication to recoup. Even the studios, however, began contracting independent producers to handle the creative end of series production and, beyond sharing in the net profits, charged these independents significant overhead fees in exchange for leasing out studio space and equipment.

Of the three networks, ABC was the most youth conscious. Though it was perennially in third place until the mid 1970s, ABC's share of the market was still significant, and its focus on youth markets was partly a branding strategy – though one that was not entirely motivated by necessity. In general, however, all three networks began paying greater attention to the youth market in the 1960s, responding both to the increased disposable income and media-friendliness of this demographic and to the emergence of more specialized ratings data that segmented the market according to generational tastes. The teenagers the networks pursued were not the counter culture youth the film studios were going after, but a more sanitized variation. Programs like *Gidget* (1965-1966) and *The Patty Duke Show* (1963-1966) re-envisioned the traditional family sitcom from the perspectives of boy-crazy teenaged girls, providing their protagonists with greater agency than many previous representations, but whose content was largely apolitical. The networks did not fail to recognize the increasing rebelliousness of the youth culture, and they did attempt to find ways of infusing vague anti-authoritarian themes into programming that targeted teens. They also remained conscious that the older audience had not completely vanished. The result often was programming that tried to have it both ways, appealing to dual audiences

on varying levels.

Lynn Spigel has termed the comedy variations of programs geared at multiple generational audiences "fantastical sitcoms" because they often infused unrealistic and bizarre twists into the otherwise traditional domestic setting for this genre. Series like *Bewitched* (1964-1972), *I Dream of Jeannie* (1965-1970), *The Addams Family* (1964-1966), and *The Beverly Hillbillies* (1962-1971) worked on two levels, simultaneously re-affirming and deconstructing middle-class values through their surreal re-interpretation of the nuclear family.[5] Such programming often tried to infuse the parodic and anti-hierarchical style-politics embraced by the youth culture into established generic situations appreciated by more adult audiences. These programs also had the added advantage of generating multiple merchandising outlets catering to different viewer sensibilities. In this regard, they may have challenged middle-class values, but not the consumer culture that fostered them. Certainly, *Batman* was intended to be read through this bi-focal lens, as action-and-adventure friendly for small children and camp parody for young adults, while generating commercial tie-ins for audiences of all ages. By the early 1970s, these fantastical variations would be replaced by more overtly political "quality" sitcoms like *All in the Family* (1971-1983) and *Mary Tyler Moore* (1970-1977).

To a certain extent, TV series like *Batman* and film franchises like James Bond purposely blurred the boundaries between action and comedy. *Batman* was certainly action-packed, but at 30-minutes twice-weekly, instead of 60-minutes once a week, and with tongue-firmly-planted-in-cheek, it is little wonder that it was nominated for best comedy series in 1966. Similarly, Bond's one-liners were as integral to the successful formula as were his myriad gadgets and sexual conquests. Arguably, by infusing a sense of ironic humor into the action-adventure format, these texts further allowed for multiple audience readings, suitable for both pro and anti-materialist, conservative and progressive, high and lowbrow tastes. The wide-ranging trans-media and merchandising potential of these texts were, in fact, not only a licensor's dream come true, but were driven by licensing logic from their very outset.

BOND, BATMANIA, INSTITUTIONAL NOSTALGIA AND MERCHANDISING

The 1965-1967 *Batman* television series was one of the most successful integrated merchandising and licensing phenomena to date – something most historical accounts of the series only mention in passing. The analyses that have been written on the series have been primarily

concerned with either its appeals to multiple audiences, whether generational or queer, or with its relationship to the emerging pop art movement and camp sensibilities of the late 1960s.[6] Both approaches are also largely directed outward, at audience reception and recollections of the series, while giving only a passing glance at the institutional context in which *Batman* emerged. Of these accounts, Will Brooker's work is perhaps the most engaged with situating the series historically within the "institutional matrix" of television, but as Brooker concedes, his form of analysis "tends toward reconstructing institutions and audiences from textual analysis."[7] In other words, Brooker seeks to understand 1960s television's institutional culture by reading backwards from the *Batman* TV text produced within it.

The shortcoming of such an approach is that it often privileges a select set of texts (in Brooker's case, the television text) over the brand inter-text that functions as the locus of managing cultural meanings for licensed trans-mediated properties like Batman and which is adjusted to institutional goals. As Bennett and Woollacott argue in relation to the James Bond phenomenon, "it is within the circulations and exchanges between [advertising, fanzine articles, interviews, spoofs, and parody] texts and the films and novels that the figure of Bond has achieved the

wider popular currency... as the relations between these texts have changed, so the figure of Bond has functioned as the bearer of different meanings at different points in time, in different contexts and for different audiences."[8]

While Bennett and Woollacott point to the significance of understanding how shifting relationships between institutions shape the meanings that popular icons like James Bond take on, they rarely if ever identify the roles that branding, licensing, and merchandising play in delineating, exploiting, and linking the various textual representations a licensed property inhabits within this institutional matrix, nor the licensor's function as navigator of shifting institutional and cultural tides. Thus, they never once mention the Licensing Corporation of America's (LCA) role in furthering Bond's popularity, just as Brooker never mentions them in relation to the *Batman* television series. I argue that by focusing inwards on the roles licensing and merchandising played in furthering and shaping the public's awareness of these properties, the significance of both Bond and Batman as "popular heroes" takes on additional meaning, because they point to a moment of integration within the cultural industries, where the licensing practices developed by the likes of Trendle-Campbell-Meurer (TCM) from the 1930s-1950s are beginning

to be fulfilled in-house by media producers and are becoming central to production strategies.

Jay Emmett and Allan Stone formed the LCA in 1960. Both men had been involved in the licensing profession for many years before their partnership, Stone as licensor for Howdy Doody, the television puppet character created by his brother, Martin Stone, and Emmett for National Press Periodicals' (NPP) stable of superhero characters. Emmett had been licensing Superman and Batman merchandise since the late 1940s, having convinced his uncle, National Periodicals CEO Jack Liebowitz, to let him handle the (at that point) peripheral aspects of the company's business dealings, such as placing Superman's face on t-shirts in exchange for a small royalty on every deal he could make. In the late 1950s, Stone also became the licensor for Lassie, while Emmett merchandised the Pat Boone show. Both Stone and Emmett had tried unsuccessfully to expand their licensing businesses by representing actors in merchandising and sponsorship deals - Stone with Jackie Gleason and Emmett with Brigitte Bardot – but quickly learned that fictional properties could be merchandised far better than their often-unruly performers.[9] The two partnered in 1960 and landed the James Bond licensing contract in 1965. LCA's Bond licenses pulled in approximately $50 million in retail sales in

1965. Batman, which LCA also licensed through Emmett's NPP connections, was expected to equal or surpass that total.[10] Combined, these two properties accounted for 25 percent of the estimated total licensing business in the US in 1966. Overall, LCA represented 35 different properties for 11 publishing houses, motion picture and television producers and had licenses with over 900 manufacturers estimated at $100 million annually.[11] As a comparison, from January to June 1954, the six month period prior to Trendle selling the property to the Wrather Corporation, the licensor earned
$37, 357.39 from 60 different Lone Ranger merchandising licenses, or, an estimated 5 percent of the total net sales on Lone Ranger merchandise, which was approximately $747,147.80.[12]

LCA, in 1965-66, was bought by NPP, in exchange for 38,000 shares of the publisher's stock.[13] A 1966 article in *True Magazine* called the deal an "all-in-the-family transaction," since LCA already handled all of National's licensing to begin with.[14] From NPP's perspective, the deal not only meant adding extra revenue from LCA's existing licenses, but also further integrating their existing properties within an increasingly trans-mediated and merchandised web. As Liebowitz explained to stock holders, "in one form or another, Batman, Superman, Wonder Woman,

The Flash, Green Lantern and other members of our family of fiction heroes can be molded and merchandised to suit every taste - as television performers, as illustrations for magazine advertising and point-of-sale displays, as promotional products for the ice-cream, dairy, soft drink, baking and confectionary industries, as syndicated comic strips, and as hundreds of different toy and apparel products for children and teenagers."[15]

This year, 1965, was also when William Dozier's Greenaway Productions and its partner, 20th Century Fox would enter into a production deal with NPP and ABC-TV for the creation of the *Batman* TV series. Since the mid 1950s, television had replaced radio as the central site for exposing trans-mediated brands nationally, and as such, the timing of NPP's acquisition of LCA and its TV deal with Dozier and ABC was coordinated to generate a merchandising blitz. While the *Batman* TV text was necessary for developing new forms of brand recognition and merchandising outlets for the property, this function is often overlooked in favor of discussing whether the TV series inspired changes to the *Batman* comic book.

Brooker, for instance, points to changes made to the comic book during this period in order to align it more firmly with the TV-series.

While Brooker points out that DC Comics did not sign away its rights to the Batman character or his representation, nor was it legally bound to incorporate changes Dozier suggested, he argues that they were opportunistic in building on the television series' success.[16] The *Batman* television series definitely helped revitalize interest in the sagging *Batman* comic book, which nearly doubled its sales the first year the TV series was on the air.[17] Changes made to the comic book included the reintroduction of Bruce Wayne's butler, Alfred, who had been killed off several years earlier, because the Dozier production prominently featured the character. Brooker also cites DC Comics' re-introduction of the Batgirl character because Dozier saw the need to add a female heroine to bolster the series sagging third-season ratings. Essentially, Brooker's assessment places DC Comics in the passenger's seat, occasionally giving directions, but essentially leaving the driving to Dozier. This is hardly the case. In fact, it was NPP's production consultant, Allen Ducovny (who had also been involved in the production of the *Superman* radio series for Mutual radio throughout the 1940s), who initially approached Dozier with the idea of reintroducing the Batgirl character as a potential spin-off TV series.[18] Dozier acknowledged that LCA had similarly approached him about Batgirl possibly "opening up new merchandising possibilities."[19]

Dozier's hesitation came from his need for assurance that Batgirl would be prominently featured in the comic book before he invested part of his production budget in adding a new character to the mix. "What I would like to know is whether National Periodicals is planning to continue BATGIRL as an integral part of the BATMAN comic books or whether you will wait to get a reaction to the first BATGIRL installment before deciding whether or not to continue. We wouldn't want to consider putting the BATGIRL into a show if we were to drop her shortly thereafter."[20] While Batgirl's eventual introduction on the TV series was in response to *Batman*'s ratings free fall, it was an idea already bandied about as a merchandising gimmick for nearly two years.

Even as Brooker concedes that the series generated thousands of commercial tie-ins and hundreds of merchandised spin-off items, his continued privileging of the television text causes him to identify licensing and merchandising as by-products of the *Batman* series, rather than integral to its genesis. I argue that there was an explicit narrative connection between foregrounding Batman's gizmos and gadgets as integral aspects of the plot of any given episode and the availability of Batman gizmos and gadgets for consumption in department stores and supermarkets across America. As Lorenzo Semple Jr., *Batman*'s

supervising scriptwriter, bluntly wrote to Dozier prior to the series debut, "I can tell you that we've created one absolutely guaranteed new t.v. star: The Batmobile." [21] Similarly, LCA's Jay Emmett explained that Batman was a better licensing property than Superman because of the gadgets. "Superman does everything with his own superhuman powers. This is fine for the forces of righteousness, but not so good for licensing agents. Batman, on the other hand, is a licensing agent's dream. 'Batman is a guy like you and me,' Emmett said dreamily, 'he needs equipment'."[22]

The DC Comics/Dozier agreement called for each party to get a percentage of the merchandising rights. ABC also got a share in exchange for handling the massive publicity campaign for the series.[23] The Licensing Corporation of America, a subsidiary of National Press Periodicals, which also happened to own DC Comics, handled the licensing for the series. While DC Comics sales for *Batman* comic books doubled the year the Dozier series debuted, it is perhaps more significant that NPP's net profits rose nearly 16 percent from the commissions they collected on Batman merchandising licenses, with an estimated 10-20 percent rise anticipated for 1966.[24] *Batman* comics sold at 25 cents a book; the commissions earned from merchandising licenses promised to be significantly higher. As an added bonus, Liebowitz boasted that profits

rose without NPP "gambling with its own capital" on the television production, whose budget was entirely absorbed by Greenaway/Fox and partly subsidized by ABC.[25] Instead, NPP received a royalty of $1000 each time an episode aired and 20 percent of the profits generated through advertising revenue and syndication sales.[26]

Moreover, Dozier's investment in foregrounding merchandising opportunities on the TV series was not only linked to his company's percentage deal, but also to the changing production culture of television in general. The money ABC paid per episode of the *Batman* series was only a fraction of the actual production cost, meaning that Dozier had to hope the series would last long enough to generate the minimum number of episodes necessary to see profits from syndication rights. ABC paid Dozier $65,000 per episode. Each episode was rumored to cost well over $75,000.[27] This differential increased his eagerness to reap merchandising rewards, which were doled out yearly, in order to offset the uncertainty of syndication profits. In fact, Dozier wrote to Jay Emmett at LCA at the end of the 1965-66 season and requested a list of Batman merchandise available in order to help better promote those items on the series and in its surrounding publicity in the upcoming season. In response, Emmett sent Dozier a list of the 173 Batman licensees as of September 1966 (after

only half a season on television) and the items they manufactured.[28] Included on this list was a Batman and Robin trading card game manufactured by Trans World Sales, which claimed to be tied directly to the TV series, that advertised to potential retailers that "the fantastic story situations that will appear on next week's ABC-TV's BATMAN program are shown on every BATMAN GAME card you distribute this week."[29] While the promotional gimmick was somewhat misleading (there was a *possibility* that the scenario portrayed on a game card might be included at the end of a *Batman* cliff-hanger episode and if so, customers could win cash prizes), it suggests a highly integrated relationship between programs and merchandise, designed to tie viewer ratings to consumer purchases.

Brooker accurately identifies that the majority of merchandise generated was aimed at children (1/3 were toys), but points out that adults also partook in Batmania through creative "poaching" in pop art, discotheques, dances, and even haircuts inspired by the *Batman* series.[30] Much as Brooker claims that adult responses were directly related to the show's pop-art status (a factor heavily promoted by ABC and Dozier), I argue that they were also explicitly linked to licensing and merchandising strategies. The *Batman* series generated a publicity blitzkrieg even before it debuted on television and a lot of the publicity overtly linked the series

to the pop art movement, going so far as to invite artists Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein to an advance screening of the series premiere. Pop art drew upon advertising and comic books for inspiration.[31] The publicity departments at ABC and LCA also heavily promoted these adult derivatives as evidence of the Batman brand's popularity, even though most of them operated without official licensing approval or royalty payment. This is because these "poachings" were largely supportive of the larger consumer culture that Batman merchandise thrived on while taking the spotlight off the deliberate merchandising logic that drove the series.

The changing television programming climate of the mid-1960s also contributed to the style politics of the *Batman* series.[32] Lynn Spigel has identified the emergence of the "fantastic sit-com" during this period, which infused the genre's familiar domestic setting and nuclear family formula with gimmicks such as making the main character a witch (*Bewitched*) or a genie (*I Dream of Jeannie*) or a Halloween monster (*The Munsters*, *The Addams Family*). [33] Fantastic sitcoms both re-enforced and unraveled the containment logic of the domestic comedies they parodied, and as such, were designed to appeal to audiences of different ages by operating on both a zany childlike level and by reveling in the 'uncanny' to the point of becoming satirical spoofs of the middle class values that

earlier domestic comedies unabashedly endorsed.[34]

This dual-address strategy also bore an uneasy connection to licensing practices as they had been developed over the past thirty years. Whereas Trendle had repeatedly argued that his properties appealed to both adults and children and could be easily tweaked to cater to one over the other depending on sponsor needs, the *Batman* TV series, as well as others, sought to appeal to both audiences at once. Trendle argued against pandering to children, believing that the Lone Ranger's appeal for all audiences laid in the virtues the character possessed, not the arousal of emotions through cliffhangers and illogical plot contrivances. Fantastic sitcoms purposely reveled in absurdity, however, and asked older viewers to read stories allegorically or with a sense of irony. As Semple explained the *Batman* audience strategy to Dozier, "I wrote the most dangerous line in Bat-Poop, when I reminded writers that we must appeal on two levels: to kids & grown-ups too. I see now, appeal on sophisticated level must come from inherent juvenility of story-line."[35]

Despite their prior incarnations, such dual-address strategies, as well as the practices of licensing agencies like LCA in general, were treated as unprecedented by the trade and popular press coverage they received, rather than mere intensifications and adaptations of existing

processes. For example, in 1966, a *True Magazine* article described the licensing profession as "one of the least known ways to make a buck in the business world."[36] Elaborating on what LCA did, the article explained that licensors act as "broker[s], deal[ing] out permission to manufacturers to make products using the name of the property" while fulfilling the multiple roles of "legal advisor, salesman, merchandising expert, package designer, promoter, advertising consultant, brusher-offer, whooper-upper and Dutch Uncle."[37] Licensors performed these multiple roles in exchange for 5 percent of the wholesale price of a manufactured item, which was then split between the licensor, the intellectual property owner, and others involved in publicly promoting the property, such as television or film producers.[38] The article also nicely articulated the complex relationship licensors had to their clients, both selling to them and advertising for them at the same time.[39] It also pointed to the role of moral arbiter that licensors had to assume, choosing whom to license to or not based on existing assumptions of needing to protect children. In the article, Stone described a potential client who wanted to sell soft drinks for dogs bearing Lassie's image. Stone turned him down, not because he didn't think the product would sell, but because he worried that children might accidentally consume it.[40] While the article accurately described the licensing trade, it

also a-historically identified Stone and Emmett's work as essentially launching the licensing profession (with a brief nod to Mickey Mouse as well).[41] Much of what I have argued in previous chapters situates these practices and attitudes as emerging in a much earlier era.

What the article accurately conveyed, however, was the growing importance and recognition of licensing as central to business practices within cultural industries, rather than on the periphery or in the interstices, operated by independents. Beyond celebrating LCA's "selling-out" to NPP, the piece also identified the television networks as also possessing their own internal licensing divisions, and discussed the growing complexity of divvying up royalties as merchandising rights became more important to production deals. Explaining how the royalties for James Bond merchandise were divided, the writer stated, "the divvy on the licensing fees is a complicated one. LCA gets its cut. [Bond Executive Producer, Harry] Saltzman and his co-producer, Albert R. (Cubby) Broccoli, get theirs. Glidrose Productions, to whom Bond's creator, Ian Fleming, sold 51 percent just before he died, gets a cut, as do Fleming's heirs. In addition, United Artists, the films' distributors, gets a percentage, and even actor Sean Connery gets a percentage from Saltzman and Broccoli. That's a lot of willing hands, but what they are cutting up is five

percent of a very rich and filling pie."[42]

It is perhaps both surprising and obvious that within this media environment, the Green Hornet would finally get its much delayed television series. On the one hand, the various practices that Trendle had championed were now a fully integrated facet of cultural production, and the success of the Dozier *Batman* series awakened institutional memories of other successfully merchandised properties that might be modernized and repackaged for consumption. On the other hand, Trendle's valuation of his properties' appeals were believed to be outmoded, as were his assertions of his rights to external managerial authority in order to protect and preserve the integrity of his brand and audience expectations of it.

GREEN HORNET DEAL

Nevertheless, Trendle finally made a deal on September 29, 1965 with 20th Century Fox Television (TCFT) and Greenaway productions to create a television series based on the Green Hornet property. Trendle also had entertained offers from MGM-TV and Screen Gems for the property. As Trendle wrote to Lee Bland at the Leo Burnett agency, "everybody seems to want THE GREEN HORNET since the James Bond series turned out so well."[43] Dozier's success with the pre-sale of the *Batman* TV series

to ABC likely also played a part in TCFT backing the deal. Both Bond and *Batman* were tremendous coalition-audience builders with multiple merchandising outlets, and the Green Hornet was likely seen as replicating this pattern.

The Green Hornet TV series debuted on September 9, 1966 at 7:30PM on ABC-TV opposite *Wild, Wild West* (1965-1970) on CBS and *Tarzan* (1966-1969) on NBC. *Wild, Wild West* was a hybrid-genre show that incorporated elements of the spy thriller into the western setting. Similar to the Green Hornet brand, *Tarzan* was based on a pre-sold property. The Tarzan brand had been much more fully exploited over the years than the Green Hornet though; by the 1960s it had generated multiple films, comic books, a long-running comic strip, and a radio series. Both *Tarzan* and *Wild, Wild West* were hour-long programs, while *The Green Hornet* was 30-minutes. Viewers would have had to miss the first half of these two programs in order to watch *The Green Hornet* (all three started at 7:30PM). *The Green Hornet* was followed by *Time Tunnel* (1966-1967) at 8:00PM. Of the three 7:30PM programs, *Wild, Wild West* was the only one to crack the Nielsen's national top-30 ratings. It finished in 23rd place with a rating of 22.0**.** In comparison, *The Green Hornet* drew a National Nielsen rating of 16.1 during the first two weeks of October

1966. *The Green Hornet* outranked *Tarzan* and *Wild, Wild West* however when only the top-30 urban markets were counted, earning a 34.6 rating the week of October 19th, which was good for second overall behind *Rat Patrol*.[44] As Dozier explained to Trendle, "some shows by their very nature do better with people in urban areas as against rural areas."[45] Since this was prior to the networks' privileging urban markets over their rural counterparts, ABC cancelled *The Green Hornet* on January 21, 1967 after only 26 episodes. Though counter-programming on CBS and NBC played a part in the series' demise, many of the difficulties encountered in the actual production can be traced back to the contract Trendle originally signed with TCFT.

The TCFT contract called for a $2000 initial licensing fee to be paid to TCM's licensing arm, The Green Hornet Inc. (GHI), plus an additional $750 for every episode produced. GHI also earned 25 percent of any net profits from sale of the series and related merchandising opportunities. Trendle was personally paid an additional $500 per episode as a consultant, and was granted final script and casting approval, so long as his suggested revisions were not "unreasonable." The contract also contained contradictory language that gave TCFT and Greenaway the rights to create derivative materials based on the original Green Hornet

series while it also protected the original source material against substantial revision. Article 1c of the contract gave the producers the right to "translate, adapt, arrange, change, transpose, add to and subtract from said property and its title as Fox may desire... subject to paragraph 7."[46] Paragraph 7, however, stated, "the picture produced hereunder shall not depict 'The Green Hornet' in a manner substantially different from which he or the other major characters were depicted in the radio series. The relationship of the characters to each other and their reaction to any set of circumstances and their behavior much [sic] in general be consistent with that contained in the radio program."[47] As production of the series got under way, the conflicting interpretation of these clauses would become a central point of contestation between Dozier and Trendle. Trendle claimed he had the right to reject any materials that were deviations from the radio series, while Dozier argued that the contract gave him the right to modernize and update the property so long as the core cast and premise were maintained.

The contract gave TCFT and Greenaway until April 1965 to submit a pilot script and until December 1965 to start principal photography on said pilot, and then allowed an additional year, until December 1966, to sell the series to one of the networks.[48] They would

need only a fraction of that time to sell the series. On March 1, 1966, ABC bought the series before a pilot script had even been written, based largely on the success they had with *Batman*.[49] On March 3, 1966, ABC committed to 17 initial episodes.[50] The TCFT contract gave the producer exclusive merchandising and licensing rights, but also the right to sub-license these, which TCFT did to ABC-TV on March 15, 1966.[51] In exchange, ABC agreed to pay TCFT $72,500 per episode and $17,500 per repeat.[52] The actual cost of producing a *Green Hornet* episode ranged from $112,000 to $120,000, requiring Dozier to engage in deficit financing until the series reached syndication. This was where Greenaway's affiliation with TCFT came into play, as the film studio leased Dozier space and equipment, the cost of which would be deducted from the gross receipts the series earned. ABC immediately went to work on the merchandising and publicity campaigns for the new series, securing 65 licenses and an estimated $267,500 in advance royalties from merchandisers before the *Green Hornet* pilot even aired.[53] Finally, the contract prohibited GHI from entering into any other television deals for the Green Hornet property, including animation or live productions, for a period of five years following the final airing of the last permitted network telecast (whether of a new episode or a repeat).[54]

While theoretically generous, the contract Trendle signed with TCFT actually contained multiple clauses that worked against GHI sharing in any profits from the series or its related merchandising. Though guaranteed 25 percent of the net profits, the contract defined these as gross receipts minus distribution fees, distribution expenses and negative costs. Distribution fees included 10 percent to TCFT for selling the series to a domestic network, 10-35 percent for selling the syndication rights either nationally, regionally, or locally, 40 percent for selling the international syndication rights, and 50 percent for the merchandising rights. Distribution expenses included all monies spent by TCFT on publicity for the series, while negative costs incorporated all expenses borne in the production of the series, including a 15 percent overhead fee for leasing space and equipment from TCFT. Finally, a 6 percent accrued annual interest charge was also deducted before net profits were calculated.[55] The deal with ABC transferred most of TCFT's rights to the network and added a 36 percent merchandising fee that was also taken from the gross receipts. Any percentages guaranteed to talent (by the 1960s, actors, writers, directors, and producers had all started demanding a percentage of merchandising pie as part of their contracts) came out of the remaining 64 percent of the gross receipts on merchandising, and only then was the

remainder divided up 4 ways between TCFT, Greenway, GHI, and ABC-TV.[56] Though all this might seem very complicated, what is crystal clear is that both TCFT and ABC built profit-generating mechanisms into their contracts that ensured that they made money before net profits were even calculated (and which, in turn, severely reduced the total possible net profits the series could make). TCFT profited from distribution and overhead fees, while ABC-TV took a percentage of the Gross Merchandising receipts, but both GHI and Greenaway had to wait until negative costs were recouped before sharing in net profits. Moreover, since the average production cost per episode of *The Green Hornet* greatly exceeded the amount of money ABC-TV paid Greenaway Productions, the negative costs were virtually impossible to recoup unless the series was successful enough to have a long syndication run.

MEMORY

In the end, *The Green Hornet* was not a phenomenal success. While institutional memory of the merchandising possibilities that golden age radio properties possessed ensured that TCFT and ABC horded *The Green Hornet*'s profit potential, competing memories over what precisely had made the series a success in the first place also contributed to its quick

decline. Much as the *True* article suffered from lapses of memory when it came to the history of licensing before LCA, competing and selective memories would also inform the production of *The Green Hornet* television series. Independent licensor's like Trendle had paved the way for emergent media conglomerates and their focus on synergy, cross-promotion, and other integrated brand strategies. *The Green Hornet* television series would prove that Trendle's values were incommensurate with this new conglomerate system. Quite simply, what Trendle believed was essential to the popularity of the Green Hornet brand was radically different from what Dozier, Greenaway Productions, 20th Century Fox, and ABC-TV believed.

To a certain extent, memory had always been invoked strategically by licensors. As early as the 1930s, Trendle and others relied on recycling strategies that necessarily recalled past successes at merchandising or building an audience in one regional market in order to attract a sponsor or radio station in another. Trendle kept meticulous records of otherwise ephemeral events such as audience give-aways, phone surveys, and fan letters, which would continue to serve as contemporary justifications for the Green Hornet brand's appeal as well as his own managerial authority over it. Pierre Nora has described modern memory as archival, relying on

"the materiality of the trace, the immediacy of the recording, the visibility of the image" for proof.[57] Trendle's practices suggest that the archiving of memory was not only profitable, but also essential to the continued viability of otherwise invisible properties.

Ian Gordon has argued that various incarnations of the Superman text rely on nostalgia and popular memory for their appeals to audiences. According to Gordon, the pleasure audiences take from the text is the way it reworks familiar characters and tropes to fit with contemporary settings and ideals.[58] Gordon uses the example of the late 1980s/early 1990s ABC series, *Lois & Clark: The Further Adventures of Superman*'s focus on the sexual relationship between the two protagonists as one way the Superman myth was updated. "For baby boomers, Superman and Lois Lane's sexual liaison repositioned Superman as a hero of his times."[59]

In this manner, Gordon argues that Superman texts transform nostalgia and memory into ideology and commodity, using earlier iterations of the Superman story to connect past and present, memory and market. "That Superman is invoked in anecdotes of childhood adds to the commodity value of Superman as a brand name. These sort of narratives may be intensely personal, but the sentiment embedded in them gains significance not only in the repetition of the story but also at a material

level when the creators of the narratives live out those sentiments by watching a television show, collecting comic books, or seeing the latest movie." [60] Similarly, Clare Birchall argues that contemporary television shows like *Dawson's Creek* purposely rely on nostalgic strategies in their narrative and aesthetic compositions that are both politically and commercially motivated.[61] *Dawson's Creek*'s regular inclusion of 1960s music and 1980s teen movie references in its scripts, as well as the production's use of blue-filtered and yellow-hued camera lenses that gives the mise-en-scene a 1950s Norman Rockwell feel work to construct a "nostalgia for the present," links contemporary youth cultures ideologically to the 1950s while promoting continuity between past and present through consumer goods that span the past fifty years.[62]

While I agree that cultural producers have developed "nostalgic strategies" in their efforts to reach audiences, I question the contemporary nature of these activities. After all, 1930s and 1940s minstrel radio programs like *Amos n' Andy* or *Beulah* and commercial brands like Aunt Jemima and Uncle Ben often relied on patronizing and "reassuring" - for white audiences in any event - stereotypes of incompetent and complacent Blackness that were as financially rewarding as they were ideologically fraught. Additionally, I question the institutionally cohesive infrastructure

that both Gordon and Birchall assume exists in order to underpin such ideological projects. Whereas Gordon argues that it is the unchanging mythological and symbolic aspects of Superman that resonate across and unite the diverse texts that represent the character,[63] Bennett and Woollacott assert that the figure of James Bond changes in relation to the shifting industrial and cultural contexts that evoke him.[64] In managing brand formulas, licensors paid very close attention to continuity and change, relying on memories of past successes to justify what could or could not be reworked in new iterations. Certain rules were sacrosanct; others could be forgotten.

Brooker interviewed DC's librarian, Alan Asherman, who maintained that NPP kept a close watch on continuity between the *Batman* TV series and the comic book and guarded against transgressions of particular character "rules."[65] For example, Batman could not kill, or willingly allow another character, even a villain, to be killed, but he could visit a discotheque in costume and tell Robin that he was going to act inconspicuous. Batman's costume always had a utility belt, but the significance of these gadgets versus, say, the character's detective or hand-to-hand combat skills varied according to the cultural climate that inspired various textual interpretations. Trendle made similar concessions and

adjustments, so long as they did not interfere with the more enshrined codes of conduct and relationship hierarchies of his properties. Kato could be Japanese, Filipino, or Korean, but he was always Britt Reid's "Oriental" valet. Likewise, the Lone Ranger could rally children around traffic safety one day, and the virtues of patriotism another, but he was never to be placed in a situation that risked his mask being removed and his mysterious identity revealed. Trendle recognized the importance of malleability in allowing brands to be adapted to shifting institutional, cultural and social conventions. However, these formula changes existed in a state of tension with the need to maintain certain inalterable character tropes. While Trendle justified maintaining certain "rules" on the basis of his past marketing experiences and others according to his need to protect the economic value of his properties, in many instances he insisted on maintaining particular character traits and codes of conduct simply because they fit their own worldview. For instance, though it served little narrative purpose and was out of step with the more sexually-liberal politics of the 1960s, Trendle would insist that Dozier's characterization of Britt Reid's (the Green Hornet's alter ego) relationship with his secretary and potential romantic interest remain chaste and formal at all times by always having the hero refer to her as Ms. Case instead of by her

first name. These tensions suggest that licensors and licensees negotiated the ways properties were represented, rather than always acting in ideological or economic unison.

It would also be a mistake to think that the invocation of memory was simply a proactive strategy, meant to increase business. As Benjamin asserts, "to articulate the past… means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger."[66] Licensors' reliance upon remembering past successes were often defensive postures taken in response to shifting industry practices that sought to limit their authorial control and marginalize their properties, or both. Moreover, licensor memories rarely went uncontested. Nostalgic claims to the everlasting appeals of a property were often met head-on by incredulous industry responses, which usually sought to ground the profit potentials of licensed properties within particular historical contexts and relegate past successes precisely to the past. The preceding chapter demonstrated how Trendle's efforts to revitalize interest in the Green Hornet in the late 1950s were tied to his nostalgic and selective remembering of both his own and the property's past successes; it also demonstrated how this proved incongruent with the changing television production culture, which demanded new content, new pilots, and new relationships between

advertisers, producers, and networks.

Licensors have a vested interest in preserving the hegemonic, idealized cultural memory of their properties in order to demonstrate the properties' constant appeal and the licensors' continued control. Licensees often see the value of reviving nostalgically remembered properties, but are also invested in re-contextualizing such memories to suit shifting perceptions of audience expectations. This was particularly true in the mid-1960s, as nostalgia for ephemeral and debased popular cultural objects swept through the cultural industries, driven by both the cultural currency of the pop art movement and the economic rewards of the *Batman* television series. As I argued above, institutional memories of Batman were tied to the property's merchandising potential of the use of gadgetry in his crime fighting. This was not always the main focus of earlier Batman stories, but was a significant element of the 1960s TV series. In this instance, NPP, LCA, and Greenaway's memories were mutually aligned. Dozier and Trendle, however, would not remember the Green Hornet through the same green-hued lenses. While both Trendle and Dozier agreed that *The Green Hornet* needed to be modernized for a 1960s audience, they had radically different understandings of what this meant. Whereas Dozier sought to emphasize the property's gadgetry and

gimmickry as he had with *Batman*, Trendle believed that the property's appeal lay in the civic virtues the Green Hornet embodied and his continuous battle against corrupt politicians and petty grafts.

Trendle's intransigence versus NPP's malleability emerges out of their respective production context. NPP was more flexible partly because of its existing production and distribution arms, which kept the corporation more directly in touch with consumer trends than Trendle, who had sold off the Lone Ranger and Sergeant Preston properties a decade earlier and had not produced new Green Hornet material since the early 1950s. In 1965, the same year he struck a deal with Dozier, Trendle formally dissolved TCM, the production arm of his licensing operation. In part, NPP's flexibility when it came to questions of style derived from the primary source material for its properties, the comic book medium, which had been depicting fantastical visual images and stories for decades and had moved even further toward juvenile aesthetics in the 1950s because of the threat of government regulation. Trendle's properties emerged out of radio, where the absence of visual cues required both added expository narration to explain what was happening in a logical manner and also a built-in anxiety that visible representations of radio heroes would not conform to audience expectations. Comic books were far less concerned

with realism and logic than radio productions. Moreover, radio's historical requirement to act in the public interest had produced moral and civic justifications for plot developments and character motivations that comic books did not have to address until much later, after many of their star properties had already been introduced. Whether these were followed through on or not, or appeased concerned citizen groups or not, is another matter. They nonetheless existed rhetorically and informed the culture of radio production. NPP's apparent willingness to alter the Batman formula when measured against Trendle's more entrenched position is, of course, a matter of degree. As I have argued, both Batman and the Lone Ranger had a set of fixed rules about what could or could not be done with the character.

Lynn Spigel and Henry Jenkins argue that memory often conflates personal and public history, producing a dialectic tension that allows people to explain their present identities by positioning themselves within a larger social historical context. "This autobiographical element continually entwines the past in present-day identities, so that people strive to place themselves in history, using the past as a way to understand their current lives."[67] I argue that a similar tension emerges within corporate cultures, as individual actors justify their right to make present-

day economic and ideological decisions based on memories of their past accomplishments within a larger institutional history. The real impact of struggles between individuals within institutional cultures is largely dependent on the degree of authority each possesses. Precisely because the terrain of negotiation was often uneven, particularly following the shift to the classical network era, licensors like Trendle clung to particular memories of what the Green Hornet represented and why it was popular that attempted to recuperate his own diminishing authority. Trendle's desire to maintain his managerial identity within a shifting production environment, and his reliance on memories of his past success to make demands, might seem merely misguided, if not for the script approval he was given as part of the contract he signed with Greenaway and 20th Century Fox. Trendle's memories of the way he produced *The Green Hornet* radio series in the 1940s would be used to justify his efforts to police the present production.

COMPETING AGENDAS: TRENDLE VERSUS DOZIER

On certain things, Trendle and Dozier were in complete agreement. Both understood that a *Green Hornet* television series debuting in the mid 1960s would need to be modernized and updated to account for current

audience and network expectations.[68] Some of the specific tensions that emerged, however, between Dozier and Trendle over *The Green Hornet* centered on competing memories of what made the radio series popular with audiences. Many of these struggles revolved around changing production and merchandising practices, differing cultural understandings of what made for "modern" entertainment, the need for inter-textual consistency, and the significance of the character's moral values versus the gadgetry he used.

Initially, Dozier tried to suggest that *Batman*'s style would be appropriate and necessary in adapting *The Green Hornet* for the contemporary television market because of the network's need to reach both adult and child audiences at a 7:30PM time slot. Urging Trendle to watch the *Batman* premiere as a point of reference, Dozier added, "I am sure you will agree that we can't do straight GREEN HORNET stories today as they were done on radio. We must give the characters an added style and dimension which they didn't have on radio in order to make the grade in the present day sophisticated television market."[69] Trendle's vehement opposition, however, to *The Green Hornet* being compared to *Batman* quickly led Dozier to back away from this line of argumentation. Dozier relented that *The Green Hornet* would not be "camped up" like

Batman, but would be played straight. As Dozier explained to Trendle, "I certainly see no direct relationship between BATMAN and THE GREEN HORNET. They are entirely different characters and different kinds of material. BATMAN is infinitely more bizarre and un-real and therefore much less legitimate than GREEN HORNET. The only thing we must achieve in up-dating GREEN HORNET and making it palatable for today's television market is to give it some sort of unique style without in any way detracting from its basic honesty and purpose."[70] Though Dozier had his own reasons for shifting away from any overt comparison of the proposed *Green Hornet* series with *Batman*, which included a desire to not become typecast by being his own copycat,[71] this early disagreement with Trendle would set the stage for much confusion over where the distinctions between these two series really lay - stylistically, generically, and in terms of it's imagined audience's expectations.

It quickly became apparent that Dozier and Trendle each had a very different understanding of what the "unique style" of *The Green Hornet* series would be, which included what contemporary audiences wanted, what would make *The Green Hornet* modern, and, perhaps most importantly, what was meant by "playing it straight."[72] As Trendle would write to Leonard Goldenson, President of ABC, in 1970, bemoaning what

had become of the series, “the matter of ‘interpretation’ became paramount.”[73] Trendle equated “playing it straight” with logic and realism, which he argued were key to attracting an adult audience. “I have the distinct impression that the minute that we get away from realism, and go into something that looks, more or less, fantastic, or ‘camp’, we’re taking away the effect of the balance of the picture... we might gain the younger element, but definitely kill the picture for the adults.” [74] Trendle defined the emphasis on gimmickry and gadgetry and the absence of logical and realistic plots or villains as the epitome of camp. [75] As he wrote to Dozier in 1965, while the show was still in pre-production, “I’m afraid you’re planning on making the GREEN HORNET a fantastic, unreal person which in my opinion would kill the show in six months.”[76]

Dozier repeatedly tried to explain to Trendle that the 1960s adult television audience appreciated exaggerated and parodist renditions of their childhood heroes and that by “playing it straight,” *The Green Hornet* was foregoing this audience in favor of a strictly juvenile one. “GREEN HORNET will likely not be as attractive to the adults as BATMAN because BATMAN has a campy approach which attracts many adults... Adults today are just not going to be interested in inconsequential crime stories about rackets in a city. Kids aren’t either, but kids are interested in

gimmicks, excitement, and action."[77] Even as he distinguished between the Batman and Green Hornet properties and conceived of their mode of address differently, Dozier still saw them both as part of the same generic and stylistic trend. One would be played for laughs,[78] the other would tell straightforward costumed crime-fighter stories, but both were fantasy figures that fought bizarre villains with far-fetched gadgetry. As a 1966 ABC promotional press release summarized, "Like 'Batman'... 'The Green Hornet' will specialize in lots of action and plenty of far-out crime-fighting gimmicks. But 'The Green Hornet' will be played for straight adventure, without the 'camp' humorous approach of 'Batman.'"[79] In fact, as *The Green Hornet* series began encountering ratings difficulties, Dozier drafted an 11-point plan to revitalize interest in it, which included "increased use of gadgets and gimmicks" and "more bizarre crimes and criminals, and more bizarre weapons used by criminals."[80]

Trendle complained bitterly to Dozier about the ways the scripts he read detoured from the original Green Hornet formula. Amongst the elements Trendle objected to as "camping up" *The Green Hornet* was the inclusion of a hidden door behind the fireplace from which the District Attorney would enter when visiting the hero.[81] Trendle also objected to the characterization of the District Attorney as being at the Green Hornet's

beck and call, instead of vice versa, as well as the generally inaccurate depiction of what a district attorney actually did. Dozier had changed the police commissioner character used in the 1950s Green Hornet radio series to a district attorney to avoid comparisons with *Batman*, which also had a police commissioner character, though the distinctions Dozier made between their function were largely titular.[82]

Trendle complained that plots were designed to emphasize gimmicks and gadgets over the character's detective work and civic virtue and moreover, that these plots were often illogical and inconsistent when it came to the Green Hornet's motivations.[83] Dozier argued that audiences, particularly for a 7:30PM time slot, were willing to suspend disbelief in favor of fast-paced entertainment.[84] Trendle demanded that plots be logical, or else audiences would feel cheated. "I'm a nut for trying to keep these things logical, so that when they're viewed, the audience won't say.. 'that's crazy!'.. or, 'that's fantastic'... or, 'this couldn't be done!'. I like to stay within the realm of reality as far as we can. Give the audience all the action you want, but keep it believable."[85] In one instance, he complained that a script called for the Green Hornet's car, the Black Beauty, to withstand a laser gun attack, which was illogical since it would obviously disintegrate the car's windshield or tires. Dick Bluel, Dozier's producer on

the series, wrote back agreeing with Trendle's logic, but adding, "however, since there is no such thing as a laser gun in the first place, I think that once the premise is accepted the public will not offer any objection so long as we entertain them... At the point where logic and entertainment values are in conflict, as a Producer I will always choose entertainment."[86] Bluel compromised, however, by including a line of dialogue in the script that explained that the car had been coated with a special laser-proof liquid solution.[87] Trendle responded, "in view of the fact that our friend Kato sits behind the windshield, I surely hope that the public get the idea that the special spray we are presumed to have used is transparent."[88]

Trendle recalled that *The Green Hornet* was originally conceived for a young adult audience to teach them the civic importance of voting and to call their attention to crooked politicians and rackets that the government failed to bust.[89] While these memories are inconsistent with the original Jersey-Milk-sponsored *Green Hornet* radio series on WXYZ, which was clearly aimed at children, they demonstrate Trendle's continued belief that it was the hero's moral values and civic/patriotic mission that attracted audiences and sponsors.[90] Whereas Dozier sought to make the Green Hornet's civic mission mere window dressing for a show

that focused on action, gadgetry, and frenetic entertainment, Trendle insisted that it was precisely this civic component that had made the Green Hornet popular. Invoking memories of audience responses to the radio series, Trendle boasted, “we received letters from all over the country asking if we could send the GREEN HORNET to those towns and clean up certain political problems which they weren’t able to solve themselves... One must keep the law-and-order man on a high scale doing things generally for the country not just for ordinary crooks and thieves - then you have show.”[91]

Dozier had to remind Trendle on several occasions that the Green Hornet was a fictional character and that there was a difference between playing the series “straight” and making it realistic. He reminded Trendle that it was the latter who had first introduced the Green Hornet’s gas gun and that this prop was far more outrageous than the trick fireplace Trendle griped endlessly about it. “Would you have me believe, George, old friend, that the moveable fireplace is more fantastic than a newspaper publisher who puts on a mask at night and goes out and fights crime carrying a gas gun and a hornet sting? Come now!”[92] While Trendle conceded that the gas gun was the one “camp” element he had introduced, he remained resolute about the need for Green Hornet stories to be logical

and realistic in order to be popular. Noting that Jack Webb's *Dragnet* was making a comeback in 1966, Trendle argued that *The Green Hornet* would have been better served following that series' more logical storytelling than Dozier's emphasis on gimmicks and gadgets.[93] Dozier retorted, "Evidently you are never going to understand the difference between 'Dragnet' and GREEN HORNET... 'Dragnet' is REAL... GREEN HORNET isn't real. There is nothing real about a newspaper publisher who fights crime at night with a mask on. That's the difference, and it's the whole difference."[94] Dozier had wished to "play it straight" within the existing and recognizable fantasy that *The Green Hornet* fiction took place in, while Trendle sought to make the world the Green Hornet traveled in as realistic as possible. It is not that Trendle believed the Green Hornet character could ever be mistaken for a real person, as much as he saw the property as embodying an ideal that should exist in reality.

Inevitably, Trendle saw the value of the Green Hornet property as that of a role model who viewers sought to become or to emulate through purchasing merchandise stamped with his insignia. Dozier saw the property's value as a fantasy that viewers could play along with through merchandise and other tie-ins, and as a distraction from the more serious and mundane aspects of American life. As the counterculture grew in the

mid-1960s and fears of juvenile delinquency were transformed into efforts to capitalize on (but also neutralize) the anti-authoritarian attitudes of a new generation of teenagers, such moralizing lessons became outdated. As such, where Trendle had changed the Green Hornet formula in the late 1940s, transforming the character from a vigilante into a super cop working with the police commissioner, Dozier sought to re-introduce this anti-hero element. Trendle objected on the grounds that viewers would complain that they were glorifying criminals.[95]

In many ways, Trendle saw the new Green Hornet series continuing where the radio program had left off in 1952, with only a few ornate differences to account for changing fashion trends.[96] In part, this reflected Trendle's own antiquated values. When Dozier sought to introduce the idea that Britt Reid's father had been framed by criminals and perished in prison, Trendle insisted that the Green Hornet was motivated by patriotism and not vengeance. Trendle also objected to dialogue that suggested that Britt Reid's secretary, Lenore Case, might challenge her employer's authority.[97] Trendle's insistence on continuity, however, was also intrinsically linked with his understanding of what pleased audiences. He believed that the formula he and his partners had developed had to be maintained, or else audiences would complain that the

Hornet's current incarnation bore no resemblance to his predecessor.

Trendle believed that viewers remembered the details and not the more general or prototypical aspects of the plot. He insisted that Dozier explain why the district attorney had replaced the police commissioner, the radio Green Hornet's link to the justice system. He was concerned that audiences would be confused that Britt Reid and Kato no longer lived in the apartment they had inhabited on radio and that Mike Axford, Britt's bodyguard on radio, no longer lived with them.[98] Referring to proposed changes Dozier suggested regarding Britt Reid's place of residence and the hidden location of the Green Hornet's car, Trendle wrote, "These, I feel, must be preserved, to still have it a Green Hornet show, and popular. Otherwise, everybody will be making comparisons as to what it used to be and what it is now."[99]

Trendle's desire for continuity was itself continuous with his own inter-textual managerial role as consultant for *The Lone Ranger* TV series and producer of the radio series in the late 1940s and early 1950s. As I argued in chapter 3, Trendle sought to contain possible derivations from the successful and profitable formula his company had developed with the Lone Ranger, justifying homogeneity across texts in terms of meeting audience expectations for consistency. Trendle maintained a similar

attitude toward the Green Hornet property in the 1960s, believing that audiences would feel misled if the series changed its emphasis in any way and ratings would suffer accordingly.[100] In a July 25, 1966 letter, Trendle states, "I know you fellows didn't buy the Green Hornet for the sole purpose of using the name to make something else, so if you bought the Green Hornet because of its past reputation, then I think you ought to follow through on it... if we want to cash in on the past radio shows... and its national reputation, I think that's what we'll have to do."[101]

Dozier objected that this made the series stale and bored viewers. "My personal feeling is that our shows have all looked pretty much the same and that our format is much too narrow... I want to move away from the rigid limitations of 'racket' stories. This is what gives our show the look of sameness... There just isn't enough range in racket stories and they just aren't exciting enough any more."[102] Moreover, Dozier believed that audiences might remember the radio series more generically (if at all) as a set of recurring (imagined) images and devices, but would not be concerned with (or even aware of) minor plot changes and character relationships.[103] Dozier understood the series as putting a modern spin on an established, but essentially forgotten, property. The Green Hornet, to Dozier, was a property for which the plot details and characterizations had

long faded from public memory, even as the broad surface elements - the Green Hornet's mask, his gas gun, his suped-up automobile, the Black Beauty, his "mysterious Oriental" crime-fighting sidekick/ valet, Kato - continued to resonate in the popular imagination. Dozier saw those props as the centerpieces for the new program, with the stories acting as vehicles for focusing on these gimmicks and gadgets.[104]

To build on Elric Neisser's distinction, Trendle and Dozier understood the function of memory differently, as episodic, or detailed and plot-driven versus repisodic, or broad and prop driven. Each attributed the pleasure audiences derived from the original series to these different forms of memory.[105] Regardless of which perspective was more accurate -- there is ample evidence that contemporary comic book and television fans are intensely interested in continuity -- it is clear that Trendle misunderstood a fundamental aspect of 1960s television programming that tweaked established formulas with innovative or fantastical twists precisely to elicit comparisons with the original. As Spigel has argued about the fantastical sitcom, part of the pleasure producers believed it generated was the way it played with established viewer understandings of the genre's conventions.[106] Likewise, Spigel and Jenkins assert that the 1960s *Batman* TV series elicited many comparisons by critics with the 1940s comic

book, and while these were not all favorable, they still contributed to the tremendous publicity the series generated.[107] Greenaway productions and ABC's publicity campaign for *Batman* emphasized the ways they had changed the original comic book material, while still retaining its core elements. By comparison, the publicity for *The Green Hornet* stressed how the series was essentially the same as the one that had been on radio twenty-five years earlier, reproducing rather than updating conventions that audiences already understood (if not specifically from *The Green Hornet* series, than from the crime-fighting genre in general).[108]

In an era when parody and genre-mixing allowed the networks to have it both ways, Trendle's refusal to foreground differences between the radio and television series' was incongruent with the economic and cultural value the cultural industries staked in established brands. Dozier finally spelled this out for Trendle while responding to his repeated inquiries over why Greenaway Productions had bought the rights to the Green Hornet if they only intended to change the formula:

> The reason we bought GREEN HORNET was because we felt it was a well-known title which could be <u>transformed</u> from a 1940 radio series to a 1966 television series just as we had successfully transformed BATMAN from a 1935 comic book success to a 1965 television smash. What you have insisted on our doing, however, is not transforming GREEN HORNET into a 1966 television show, but trying

> to do a television version of the 1940 radio series — keeping all those stories about the petty rackets, etc., etc.; allowing THE GREEN HORNET to function only at night, etc., etc.; wanting 'Extra! Extra!' to be blurted out at the end of each show, etc., etc.... If there is anything wrong with the television series, it is simply that we have tried to keep the flavor of a 1940 show and push it off on a 1966 audience in television form, and they just haven't accepted it.[109]

Trendle's desire for continuity extended beyond *The Green Hornet* text to his own role as licensor. He saw his managerial role in ensuring brand continuity as unchanged, with only a different financing arrangement to contend with. In reality, while his contract called for script approval, Trendle had very little leverage to actually refuse scripts. With *The Lone Ranger* television series, TCM allocated the production funds supplied by General Mills and thus could threaten to withhold payment if changes were not made according to their specifications. In 1966, ABC-TV and TCFT had complete budgetary control and Trendle's input was ceremonial at best. Dozier saw Trendle's script approval rights as the ability to highlight broader elements, not to comment on the details of plot development and character consistency. As such, he expected Trendle to understand that Greenaway could not address every suggested change he made.[110] Trendle often refused to accept this new role. He treated his

contractual right as a bargaining chip to hold over Dozier for the most minute of script inconsistencies. For example, referring to a script that he didn't feel properly clarify that the crooks the Green Hornet had busted would be convicted in a court of law, Trendle threatened, "The purpose in the contract, of having final approval of scripts, was to avoid things like this, which do not interfere with your plot... Otherwise, I'll have to send disapprovals on all these scripts, until I get a chance to straighten them out, and if I do that, you can't shoot, and that will leave us in a bind."[111]

His objections to scripts were regularly accompanied by suggestions that Dozier's writers should listen to some of the radio programs he had produced.[112] He also repeatedly reminded Dozier of his past successes, which he used to justify his careful reading of every script with an eye toward reproducing the formula that, in Trendle's mind, was key to ensuring audience satisfaction. Before tearing apart *The Green Hornet* pilot script, he confessed to Dozier,

> It makes it embarrassing for me to differ with you on any of these things, so before I get into the matter of discussing the first draft, I'm going to brag a little bit, and see if it will soften any of the criticisms I may later make... I have personally proofread, corrected, approved, cast and assisted in the production of over 3000 Lone Ranger radio shows which were very successful. The program carried a high rating for over twenty years, and was sold to Jack Wrather for three million dollars. During the same time, I also

> personally proofread, corrected, supervised and assisted in the production of some 2000 Sergeant Preston of the Yukon radio shows with like success over a long period of years, and later that program was sold to Jack Wrather for one million and four hundred thousand dollars...I feel that I do know audience reaction; I do know what kept those radio shows clicking for that long period of time; and I believe I still have the audience 'feel'. This is rather an embarrassing statement to make, but I want you to know, Bill, that I am well qualified to judge whether [a] Green Hornet script is good or bad.[113]

Trendle's constant objections and threats were finally met by Dozier sternly reminding him that they were not co-producing the series. Likewise, Bluel dismissed Trendle's complaints as unreasonable, chastising, "You will have to allow me, as the producer, the choice of deciding what dramatic form to use in telling this story... You certainly have every right to suggest a different approach, but I cannot accept your turning down scripts for this reason."[114] Trendle simply retorted that he was exercising his contractual rights. "I haven't rejected scripts right and left. I've only exercised the rights granted to me under the contract, which we all understood before it was signed... these pictures were not, in the main, *Green Hornet* radio stories."[115] While Trendle never went so far as to stop production, his micro-management resulted in multiple re-writes and a refocusing of the overall thrust of the series. Even though Trendle

was never satisfied with the final product, he succeeded in wearing Dozier down to the point where *The Green Hornet* never met either's expectations.[116] As Dozier conceded toward the end of the series:

> It has not been easy, George, to work around your particular brand of censorship, and I must tell you if I have my way about it again, I would never go into another deal where a basic owner of a property has any rights of final approval of scripts. I think one thing that has been wrong with GREEN HORNET is that we have tried too hard to make it too much like the radio series, whereas had we been left to our own devices we would have probably gone much more in the modern direction – and yes, even in the direction of BATMAN, which is what I think the public was expecting and also what the network was expecting. Everyone was expecting that but you, and I think we have let everybody down and apparently we have even let you down.[117]

Faced with imminent cancellation, Trendle finally admitted that the series "wasn't particularly pleasing to either of us because it hit the middle of the road, instead of going one way or another."[118] Trendle's recognition was accompanied by his relenting on his criticisms on the final two episodes that would be produced. It was too little too late. *The Green Hornet* was cancelled (or, more accurately, it received official notification that it would not be renewed) on January 21, 1967. In total, only 26 episodes were produced. ABC chose to broadcast a new series during the second half of the season rather than showing *Green Hornet* repeats.

While it would be inaccurate to argue that the struggles over memory in which Trendle and Dozier engaged were the only reason *The Green Hornet* television series failed, it is clear that these tensions led to a great deal of confusion over who the audience for the series was and how best to please it. In a last ditch effort to save the series, Dozier decided that rather than fight Trendle on his vision of the audience for the series, he would lobby the ABC network to extend *The Green Hornet* program from thirty to sixty minutes and put it on later in the evening, where a more adult audience could be reached.[119] In this effort, he asked Trendle to supply him with concrete evidence that there had been a significant older following for the radio series, particularly amongst the teenagers and young adults.[120] Trendle responded, "we now come to the embarrassing part of your letter, because I have no research available as to audience composition in these various time periods."[121] In place of statistical evidence, Trendle once again recited from memory his belief that "THE GREEN HORNET was created for the group between the ages of 18 and 25, i.e., the young voters-to-be, to show them, dramatically, what crooked politicians could do, and what lax police departments don't do to stop rackets... I think we did a swell job, and had a good audience."[122] This is not to suggest that Trendle was mistaken about the composition of the

original radio audience but that, in the end, these recollections could not be translated into the types of audience measurement information that Dozier needed to convince the networks.

There are certainly other factors that contributed to *The Green Hornet*'s failures. Even though Dozier and Trendle did not want *The Green Hornet* to become a copycat series for *Batman*, they could not break the *Batman* link. As argued above, while Dozier and Trendle were anxious not to replicate the Batman formula with this property, this is precisely what ABC was expecting and, to some extent, likely what audiences were expecting as well, given the way promotion of the two programs consistently emphasized their similar backgrounds as modern television adaptations of popular pulp heroes. Those backgrounds, however, were not as similar as it might seem. Emanating from very different source materials, Batman had a long history of visual representation in comic books that the Green Hornet did not. As Hal Humphrey explained in his disapproving *LA Times* TV Times review of *The Green Hornet* TV series, "on radio one couldn't see the Green Hornet, or his ridiculous mask, or his even more ridiculous car. Within the privacy of our imaginations we allow for some stretching, but when we come face to face with anything so unbelievably bizarre as the Green Hornet, and are

asked to take him seriously, then credulity is taxed beyond limits even entertained by imbeciles."[123] While Humphrey ignores other existing Green Hornet visual representations that preceded the TV series - the comic book, the film serials, and the premiums - his assertions point to the general absence of such images from popular culture since the 1940s. Whereas the *Batman* comic book was ongoing, there was not a continuous public record of Green Hornet materials available for audiences to compare the with the 1966 TV variation. Humphrey's scathing review further pointed to the underlying confusion over what type of Green Hornet would appeal to audiences, noting that one of the series' central failures was its insistence on the character being taken seriously despite the absurdity of the material. [124]

In any event, *The Green Hornet* seemed to suffer by comparison with *Batman* on multiple fronts. It was not camp enough to build a dual audience of adults and children, nor gimmicky or bizarre enough to sustain children's interest alone. It therefore could not live up to ABC's expectations for the coalition audiences and merchandising tie-ins that *Batman* had produced. At the same time, *The Green Hornet* also suffered from Batman exhaustion. After an initial ratings bonanza, by 1966 Batmania was beginning to cool off. . In 1965-1966, the *Batman* series'

first year on television, Thursday episodes ranked fifth overall with a Nielsen rating of 27.0. The Wednesday episodes ranked tenth with a 24.7 rating. By 1966-1967, neither episode made the top thirty programs. In part, this was because the other networks switched their competing fantastical series to color, whereas in 1965 *Batman* went head-to-head with the still black-and-white *Lost in Space* series on NBC. In part, this was also because ABC had overexposed the series in their efforts to maximize on its early success. The *Batman* series ran on consecutive nights, Wednesday and Thursday, with a cliffhanger used at the end of every Wednesday episode to bring audiences back the following night. While this initially had proven successful, by 1966 audiences had realized that they could be filled in at the beginning of Thursday's episode as to what had happened the night before and therefore did not need to watch on both nights. Tellingly, *Batman*'s ratings suffered most on Wednesday nights. Dozier tried to get ABC to change the formula and make *Batman* an hour-long series, but to no avail. Finally, by the late 1960s, with the Vietnam war airing on the nightly news and the Civil Rights movement in full swing, adult audiences were clamoring for more complex programming that directly confronted these issues, rather than using satire and allegory to soften their blow. By the late 1960s, many fantastical

sitcoms were being replaced by dramas or more socially relevant comedies. *Batman* was cancelled mid-way through the 1967-68 season. In a climate of declining interest in Batman's formula, *The Green Hornet* suffered because it shared the same producer and had been perceived by ABC as attracting a similar audience, even though all evidence suggests that it failed in comparison in all regards.

The decline of the fantastical sitcom and the rise of more socially relevant comedies went hand-in-hand with the networks privileging urban audiences over their rural counterparts. Many fantastical series carried high ratings in rural areas, but only mediocre ones in major metropolitan areas. Thus, CBS, the top-rated network at the time, decided to cancel the majority of its fantastical comedies in 1970, replacing the top-rated *Beverly Hillbillies* with series like *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, a comedy about a single working woman. *The Green Hornet*, which was neither a comedy nor as fantastical as ABC had hoped, actually carried above-average ratings in the top-30 urban markets, but was a ratings failure when the rest of the country was included. While there is no way of knowing if the outcome would have been any different, it is worth noting that ABC gave up on the series before the networks and their sponsors started valuing urban demographics above their rural counterparts. While all of

these factors undoubtedly played a hand in the series' short run and quick cancellation, the conflicting approaches taken by Trendle and Dozier to the source material also prevented the producers from adjusting the formula to suit either network interests or those of the changing imagined audience. Competing memories of what had made the property profitable effectively rendered it non-competitive. The end result was not only cancellation of *The Green Hornet* series after only 26 episodes, but also, due to the contract Trendle signed, the death of the brand.

DEATH OF A BRAND

As discussed earlier, *The Green Hornet* series and its related merchandise never produced a profit for either Dozier or Trendle. Certainly, both men (and their respective companies) earned some revenue from the project. Dozier received a small percentage of merchandising that was paid out prior to the calculation of net profits, while GHI was paid $750 per episode produced and Trendle an additional $500 per episode as a consultation fee, but neither saw a share of the net profits. This is largely due to the average cost per episode of the series, between $112,000 and $200,000, versus the total monies handed out by ABC-TV, $72,500, and the limited number of total episodes produced -- too few to make any

significant syndication arrangement. Moreover, GHI did not have any royalties built in to its contract for repeats, meaning that after the initial episode aired, its revenue earning ceased until the show was sold into syndication. As of the final episode produced, the negative cost of the series was $3,166,570.89, a figure that included a 15 percent overhead fee charged by TCFT.

TCFT and ABC-TV continued to profit off the series even in its failure because of the distribution and merchandising fees built in to their contract, which were guaranteed regardless of whether the show turned a profit or not. According to TCFT's accounting records, as of September 26, 1970 *The Green Hornet* series was still in the red, needing to recoup an additional $1,304, 349.31 before it would begin turning a profit, even though the series had actually generated $2,878,489.51 in gross revenue in the three years since it had first debuted. This revenue included earnings from licensing, merchandising, and off-network syndication sales. TCFT and ABC-TV claimed $419,155.26 of that revenue for themselves in distribution and merchandising costs, even though technically, the series was unprofitable.[125] This failure to generate profit might have been sustainable had it not been for the five-year waiting period built in to the TCFT/GHI contract, which forbade Trendle from making another

television deal with the Green Hornet property until April 1972. This effectively closed off all other revenue streams as well, since without a nationally broadcast series, most other ancillary markets were unwilling to take a chance on the property. For example, as soon as the TV series was cancelled, Dell Publishing, which had been contracted to produce a *Green Hornet* comic book, cancelled its

contract. Trendle did pursue the audiocassette market, but there was very little money to be made in recycling old episodes as novelties and nostalgia (for the licensors, not the distributors, who did decently).

Trendle did not take this stalemate sitting down. Between 1968-1970 he made several attempts to convince Dozier to revive production interest in the series with another network, this time strictly following his 1940s formula. Trendle even offered to canvass for a sponsor himself, with Dozier only needing to worry about the actual production.[126] Trendle's proposition suggests the degree to which he was completely out of touch with how television was being produced in the late 1960s, regardless of whether his vision for the series might have been successful or not. By the late 1960s, sponsors were no longer investing directly in television production.

Exhausted from Trendle's overbearing tactics, Dozier replied, "I

don’t wish to offend you any more than I already have on several occasions, but I honestly would not be interested in producing a GREEN HORNET television series along the lines of the radio show, no matter how much money there might be in it. You may find it hard to believe, but there are many things I will not do for money, and this is one of them.”[127] Trendle was unwilling to accept Dozier’s refusal to revive the program and, as of 1970, was still haranguing ABC-TV to let him out of his contract. Still claiming that if the television series were made along the lines of the radio show, it would have been profitable, Trendle offered to pay off the remaining $1.3 million loss through offering the network a percentage of whatever profits he would make from producing a new series. Trendle reasoned that this was the only way for ABC-TV to recoup its losses and that it did not make financial sense for them to sit on the property instead of allowing Trendle to revive interest in it. Once again, Trendle failed to understand the degree to which merchandising and distribution revenue earned from syndication were central to network profits. While GHI earned nothing from the series, ABC-TV continued to make money off of it, which they were unwilling to relinquish by having a competitive and updated product to contend with. The network’s desire to earn residual income off repeats and discounted merchandise outweighed

their interest in reactivating the brand.

CONCLUSION

Independent licensors had prided themselves on their managerial roles, reigning in network, sponsor, and other cultural producer ideas that threatened the economic or moral values of their properties. By the end of the 1960s, the networks and film studios saw such independents as hindrances, since their functions were now being fulfilled in-house. Moreover, the cultural landscape had shifted since the 1930s from a pronounced anxiety about selling to children and conflicting attitudes toward consumption and civic duty, to a consumer-driven entertainment machine that unabashedly targeted the youth market without needing to invoke moral values or to teach civic participation. The networks reasoned that the need for such a close monitoring of their work by independent licensors was no longer either necessary or welcome. While Trendle's dated ideas about what had made the Green Hornet popular were not the only factors that contributed to the television series' failure, they were identified as such by Dozier, who claimed that it was precisely this independent owner seeking to manage his property from outside the

studio and network structure that interfered with the profitable exploitation of the brand.

George Trendle died in March 1972, one month before *The Green Hornet* TV rights would have reverted back to him. While it is questionable whether Trendle might ever have succeeded in landing another television deal, it is clear that by the time of his death, branding, licensing, merchandising, and cross-promotion had all become integral to the networks and studios' cultural production logics. ABC-TV and TCFT each had their own licensing and merchandising divisions. Kinney's 1965 purchase of NPP (and with it, both DC Comics and LCA) followed by Warner Bros., in 1969 would not only create one of the largest entertainment conglomerates of its era (and beyond), but also one whose business model was built around in-house brand management and extension. By the end of the 1970s, after adding Time, Inc. to its media empire, the re-christened Time-Warner would produce one of the most ambitious projects to date premised largely on mobilizing intellectual property within a diversified and integrated media corporation: *Superman: The Motion Picture* (1978). Though often overshadowed by *Star Wars*' success a year earlier, *Superman* better exemplifies early conglomerate efforts at brand management, taking the Superman property and not only

building a major motion picture franchise around it, but also tying promotional and merchandising efforts for the films back into Time-Warner's book, magazine and comic book holdings. Though updated for the 1970s, the *Superman* movie largely recycled elements of the brand formula that had been in circulation since the 1940s, offering audiences both continuity and innovation. The innovations, however, largely presupposed existing audience understandings of what the Superman brand was and what the icon stood for so that new elements could be directly compared with their memories of the film's comic book, comic strip, cartoon, live-action television and film serial precursors. Indirectly, Time-Warner owed many of these ideas to work done over a century beforehand by independent licensors like Trendle.

Trendle, however, would most likely not have succeeded in re-launching the Green Hornet brand even had he lived to reclaim the television rights. Trendle's unwillingness to rework the Green Hornet formula in order to recast for emphasis on gadgetry and gimmickry coupled with his insistence on the hero's civic virtuousness remained out of touch with television programming strategies, even as independent producers in the 1970s managed to reclaim some of their lost autonomy. In 1970, the FCC introduced the Financial Interest and Syndication (Fin-

Syn) and Prime Time Access rules (PTAR), which were intended to break the networks' control over program production and syndication and to stimulate competition amongst independent producers. Fin-Syn limited the number of programs a network could own and the number of times they could exhibit programs before the syndication rights reverted back to the producer. PTAR forced the top-50 markets to stop carrying network programming during the first hour of prime-time, opening up space for independent productions to sell programs directly to affiliates. Though these conditions held promise for Trendle (had he lived long enough) to produce a *Green Hornet* TV series as he saw fit**,** independent of network control and ownership, there still would have been the question of what type of program to produce.

As the networks recast their prime-time line-ups to cater to urban audiences and responded to demands for more socially "relevant" programming, new series like *All in the Family*, *Mary Tyler Moore*, and *M.A.S.H.* appeared. Though produced by new independents like Norman Lear, MTM and Larry Gelbard, who exercised greater creative and financial control over their productions, these series featured morally complex and ambiguous characters that would not have fit Trendle's model for creating heroes. Moreover, these series were almost exclusively

comedies, not action-adventure or crime shows. Action and crime programming also continued to be produced in the 1970s, but these shows were more expensive than the sitcoms and thus remained reliant on Hollywood studio and network financial support (the networks fought the Fin-Syn rules, delaying their full implementation until 1980).

Moreover, programs like *The Six Million Dollar Man* (Harve Bennett and MCA-Universal, 1974-1978), *The Incredible Hulk* (Kenneth Johnson and MCA-Universal, 1978-1982) and *The Mod Squad* (Bud Ruskin, 1968-1973) continued *Batman*'s legacy of emphasizing gimmicks and gizmos in their narrative formulas and extensively merchandised products ranging from lunch pails to action figures, posters and board games to novelizations and comic books. In all three instances above, the characters were the gimmicks. Again, this was antithetical to Trendle's formula, which stressed that audiences wanted to purchase merchandisable props (costumes, weapons, etc) that were extensions of the hero's inner virtuousness, not outer appearance. Trendle continued to misunderstand the television market, just as licensing and merchandising were becoming central to its operations. Finally, though the producers of *The Six Million Dollar Man* and *The Incredible Hulk* might (arguably) have had greater creative control over the television production itself, licensing and

merchandising rights continued to be handled by larger corporate entities like the networks, studios and comic book publishers. As such, even had Trendle regained managerial authority over the Green Hornet formula, this would likely not have been accompanied by control over the branded inter-text of merchandise and other licenses that were central to the business model he had cultivated from the 1930s-1950s. Managing the formula was merely a precondition for extending the brand. By the late 1960s, this model was no longer operational. The independent licensor had become obsolete while the brands they licensed and the strategies they championed would continue on without them, this time from inside diversified media conglomerates.

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1. John Bodnar, Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); Barbie Zelizer, Covering the Body: The Kennedy Assassination, the Media, and the Shaping of Collective Memory (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
2. Steve Anderson, "Masculinity and Femininity in Television's Historical Fictions: Young Indiana Jones Chronicles and Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman," in Television Histories: Shaping Collective Memory in the Media Age, ed. Gary Edgerton and Peter C. Rollins (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2001).
3. Transcription of Deposition by George W. Trendle, Buck Jones vs. Republic Productions, Inc. March 31, 1939. 29-30.
4. Thomas Schatz, "The New Hollywood,"in Film Theory Goes to the Movies, ed. Jim Collins, Hilary Radner and Ava Preacher Collins (New York: Routledge, 1993), 11-17.
5. See Lynn Spigel, "White Flight," in The Revolution Was Not

Televised, ed. Lynn Spigel and Michael Curtin (New York: Routledge, 1997), 58-59.
6. See Will Brooker's chapter on "Pop and Camp" in Batman Unmasked: Analyzing a Cultural Icon (Continuum: London, 2000); Andy Medhurst's "Batman, Deviance and Camp," in The Many Lives of The Batman, ed Roberta E. Pearson and William Uricchio (Routledge: New York, 1991); Lynn Spigel and Henry Jenkins' "Same Bat Channel, Different Bat Times: Mass Culture and Popular Memory," in The Many Lives of The Batman, ed Roberta E. Pearson and William Uricchio (Routledge: New York, 1991); and Antonio La Pastina's "Batman" entry in The Encyclopedia of Television. Second Edition, ed. Horace Newcomb (Fitzroy Dearborn: New York, 2004) for examples of both approaches - often intertwined.
7. Brooker, 195. Spigel and Jenkins also reconstruct the social climate of the 1960s in their essay, but their primary concern is in analyzing the reasons why popular memory of the series differs so radically from the discourse that surrounded the *Batman* TV show at the time of its initial airing.
8. Tony Bennett and Janet Woollacott, Bond and Beyond: The Political Career of a Popular Hero (New York: Methuen, Inc., 1987), 17-18.
9. Stone had tried to get Gleason a sponsorship contract with a diet food company, but the actor's inability to stick to his diet killed the deal Likewise, Emmett had tried to get Bardot a deal selling bras, but the actresses poor English led to a mis-communication where she informed a reporter that she never wore the devices.
10. William D. Hartley, "Smash! Batman is Hit on the Retail Scene; He Outsells Agent 007," The Wall Street Journal. ND, Circa 1966. The article estimated Batman merchandising sales at $75-80 million.
11. National Periodical Press Annual Report, 1966.
12. Statement of Income Expenses: The Lone Ranger, Inc. six-month period ending June 30, 1954.
13. LCA was actually purchased by NPP in January 1966, but its earnings were reconfigured into the latter's 1965 quarterly earning statement. National Press Periodicals Annual Report, 1966.
14. Arthur Myers, "They Bought the Rights to get Rich," True: The Man's Magazine, December 1966. It is worth noting that Fawcett Publications, a subsidiary of National Periodicals, published True Magazine.
15. Ibid. NPP similarly established a distribution subsidiary for its television and film productions called Superman TV Corp. NPP ensured

that they retained worldwide distribution rights for their earlier productions, such as the 1941 and 1943 Batman and 1948 and 1950 Superman film serials, the 1940 Paramount Superman cartoons, and the 1953-1958 *Adventures of Superman* television series. Syndication deals for the Superman TV series netted $1,250,000 in 1965 alone.
16. Ibid, 185-186.
17. Brooker, 179. Brooker suggests that before the TV series debuted, the comic book was in danger of cancellation. An Advertising Age article from 1966 reveals that the success of the TV series revitalized advertising revenue for the comic book, which rose 18 percent from 1965 to 1966. As this growth represented only a fraction of the profits once generated by the comic book publisher from advertising (at its height, NPP earned nearly $1,000,000 annually from advertising, as opposed to the $393,000 earned in 1966), this seems little more than a bonus and hardly might account for revitalizing the comic. The real revitalization likely came from NPP's re-invention of its primary functions as publisher and distributor to licensor and brand manager. The comic book became a loss leader for other merchandising and licensing arrangements, meant to sustain the character in the popular culture arena and develop characters, gadgets, and plots that could then be reconfigured into other media and products.
18. TLS, Ducovny to Dozier, October 14, 1966.
19. TLS, Dozier to Ducovny, October 14, 1966.
20. Ibid.
21. TLS, Semple to Dozier, August 6, 1965.
22. Myers, "They Bought the Rights to get Rich,." December 1966.
23. In a letter from Ell Henry, ABC's Director of Network Press Information to Dozier, Henry provides a 15 point list covering ABC's publicity for the series, including press releases, taking and mailing publicity photos on a national scale, a gallery shooting of Adam West and Burt Ward that was then distributed to all newspapers in the US that published in color, arranging articles and interviews in newspapers, magazines, and on television and radio. TLS, Henry to Dozier, January 5, 1966.
24. Advertising Age, ND. Circa 1966.
25. Advertising Age, ND. Circa 1966.
26. William D. Hartley, "Smash! Batman is Hit on the Retail Scene; He Outsells Agent 007," The Wall Street Journal, ND, Circa 1966. NPP employed this royalty and percentage logic in all cultural domains,

collecting 1 percent of gross box-office receipts for the popular off-Broadway production of Superman: The Musical, which earned $67,000 per week and was eventually optioned as a TV special on CBS. “The Story of Pop: What it is and How it Came to Be,” Newsweek, 25 April 1966.
27. Exact figures are unavailable. These figures are the ones that circulate on the Internet and are likely inaccurate, particularly when it comes to the actual cost per episode, which was likely much higher than $75,000. See http://www.1966batfan.com/History.htm .
28. Telegram, Dozier to Emmett, September 20, 1966. TLS, Emmett to Dozier, September 21, 1966.
29. Publicity packet for Trans World Sales for retailers of the Batman and Robin game.
30. Brooker, 214-215. Brooker borrows Henry Jenkins’ terminology of fan poaching to describe such phenomena as the Wayne Manor Discotheque in San Francisco, the Batusi dance craze and Batman-style haircuts.
31. Ibid, 183-184.
32. Ibid, 195.
33. Spigel, 58-60; Brooker, 195. Brooker argues that adult audiences read *Batman* through the fantastic sitcom lens while children interpreted the series within the conventions of the science fiction genre.
34. See Spigel, 58-60. These types of programs often were rife with contradictions, but also blandly apolitical, choosing veiled metaphor and comical fantasy to convey diluted social critiques. These programs are often criticized for being out of touch with the political culture of the 1960s, but it is more accurate to assert that they purposely avoided overt address in favor or satirical takes on the middle-class ideal, simultaneously re-affirming its innate goodness while suggesting its impossibility.
35. TLS, Semple to Dozier. November 22, 1965.
36. Arthur Myers, “They Bought the Rights to get Rich,” December 1966.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. TLS, Trendle to Bland, November 10, 1965.
44. TLS, Trendle to Dozier, October 17, 1966.
45. TLS, Dozier to Trendle, October 17, 1966.

46. See Copy of Memorandum Agreement: The Green Hornet, Inc., and Twentieth-Century-Fox, Television, Inc./ Greenway Productions, Inc. September 29, 1965.
47. Ibid
48. Ibid.
49. Telegram, Dozier to Trendle, March 1, 1966.
50. Telegram, Dozier to Trendle, March 3, 1966.
51. See Copy of Memorandum Agreement: The Green Hornet, Inc., and Twentieth-Century-Fox, Television, Inc./ Greenway Productions, Inc. September 29, 1965 and Synopsis of Agreement Twentieth-Century-Fox Television and The American Broadcasting Company, March 15, 1966.
52. Synopsis of Agreement Twentieth-Century-Fox Television and The American Broadcasting Company, March 15, 1966.
53. TLS, Trendle to Meurer, September 8, 1966 AND list of Green Hornet licenses and products assembled by ABC Merchandising Inc., and sent from Dozier to Maurice Morton, heat of TCFT publicity, August 19, 1966.
54. See Copy of Memorandum Agreement: The Green Hornet, Inc., and Twentieth-Century-Fox, Television, Inc./ Greenway Productions, Inc. September 29, 1965.
55. See Copy of Memorandum Agreement: The Green Hornet, Inc., and Twentieth-Century-Fox, Television, Inc./ Greenway Productions, Inc., Exhibit I. September 29, 1965.
56. Synopsis of Agreement Twentieth-Century-Fox Television and The American Broadcasting Company, March 15, 1966.
57. Nora, 13.
58. Gordon, 179.
59. Ibid, 185.
60. Ibid, 184-185.
61. Birchall, 176.
62 . Ibid.
63. Gordon, 180.
64. Bennett and Woollacott, 19.
65. Brooker, 186.
66. Benjamin, 255.
67. Spigel and Jenkins, 120.
68. See TLS, Trendle to Dozier, October 7, 1965.
69. TLS, Dozier to Trendle, November 16, 1965.
70. TLS, Dozier to Trendle, November 29, 1965.

71. See Hal Humphrey, "Justice Will Out on Batman, Green Hornet," Los Angeles Times TV Times,, 19-25 March 1967, 8:12. While neither Trendle nor Dozier wanted the *Green Hornet* TV series to mirror *Batman*, their motivations were different. As owner of the Green Hornet brand, Trendle had a vested interest in eliminating comparisons, even favorable ones, between his property and one owned by someone else. Trendle worried that Dozier's success with Batman would inspire him to take the Green Hornet in a similar direction. TLS, Trendle to Dozier, July 20, 1966. Aside from the threat of a lawsuit, Trendle's ownership rights were linked with his ability to demonstrate the uniqueness of his property. As such, he had vehemently opposed NBC Blue's efforts to categorize the *Green Hornet* radio program in the late 1930s by comparing it with other popular programs, such as *District Attorney* or *The Shadow*. Trendle was willing, however to compare the Green Hornet with the Lone Ranger, despite their genre differences and the fact that the comparison reflected poorly on the Green Hornet's popularity and selling power, because he owned both properties. In fact, Trendle suggested that Dozier contact Jack Wrather, who had purchased the rights to the Lone Ranger in 1954, to inquire about linking these two properties together again the new TV series. Dozier declined, suggesting that the Lone Ranger had become over-exposed. TLS, Trendle to Dozier, November 9, 1965.

Dozier, on the other hand, did not want to become typecast as a producer of camp television. He had worked in the television industry for many years prior to *Batman*, having produced such series as the live anthology series *Danger* (1950-1955) starring Yul Brynner and the adult western *The Loner* (1965-1966), starring Lloyd Bridges, but the phenomenal success of the *Batman* television series threatened to eclipse his other accomplishments. As such, he seized upon the opportunity to do something different with the Green Hornet, while still building on the retro-nostalgia/popular hero fantasy/adventure formula that was currently in vogue on network television.

72. See TLS, Dozier to Trendle, November 16, 1965, in which he does try to suggest that Batman's style would be appropriate and necessary for the contemporary television market because of the network's need to reach both adult and child audiences at a 7:30PM time slot. "I am sure you will agree that we can't do straight GREEN HORNET stories today as they were done on radio. We must give the characters an added style and dimension which they didn't have on radio in order to make the grade in

the present day sophisticated television market." Trendle's vehement opposition to the Green Hornet being compared to Batman led Dozier to back away quickly from this line of argumentation.
73. TLS, Trendle to Goldenson, April 22, 1970.
74. TLS, Trendle to Dozier, July 25, 1965. See also TLS, Trendle to Dozier, September 14, 1966, in which he argues that in its prime, the Green Hornet carried a 55 percent adult following and that this audience could be revived with more careful attention to the logic of the plots being devised.
75. See TLS, Trendle to Dozier, September 22, 1966; TLS, Trendle to Dozier, July 21, 1966.
76. TLS, Trendle to Dozier, November 26, 1965.
77. TLS, Dozier to Trendle, September 15, 1966. This letter responded to Trendle's concerns that the lack of realistic crime fighting and the emphasis placed on gimmicks would alienate adult audiences. Dozier's response suggests that if they wanted such an audience, the show would have to be less serious than it was, not more. A March 19-25 Los Angeles Times TV Times article would later capture this tension over the Green Hornet's efforts to appeal to 1960s adults. Pointing to Trendle's insistence on keeping the character serious, the article explained, "it was easier to be serious in the 30's because there was a Depression on, and most Americans were a pretty unsophisticated breed... But America isn't that square today." Hal Humphrey, "Justice Will Out on Batman, Green Hornet," Los Angeles Times TV Times,, 19-25 March 1967, 8:12. It is not my assertion that the Times article is accurate in its assessment of the sophistication of 1960s TV audiences over their 1930s radio equivalents. As Lynn Spigel suggests, there is a tendency for every generation of consumers to consider themselves more sophisticated than their predecessors. I am interested, however, in the circulation of discourse about audience expectations that the Times article participates in, because it is these discourses that shape social and institutional structures and become sites of struggle over representation.
78. As Brooker reminds us, Batman was nominated for the Best Comedy Emmy award in 1966. Brooker, 197.
79. ABC Premiere Press Release, August 17, 1966. See also ABC Feature press release, July 28, 1966, in which Dozier explained that though Batman was intentionally campy and the Green Hornet would be played straight, they were both "fantasies in their basic framework" and that "the

Hornet will be sprinkled with electronic and other gadgets for their intrinsic interest and perhaps amusement, but they will all be scientifically and electronically possible gadgets; whereas in Batman many of the gadgets are totally ridiculous."

80. Green Hornet Eleven Point Program, ND.

81. See TLS, Trendle to Dozier, July 21, 1966; TLS, Trendle to Dozier, July 19, 1966; and TLS, Trendle to Dick Bluel, Producer of Green Hornet, September 1, 1966. A typical complaint can be found in the July 19, 1966 letter, in which Trendle argues, "I do hope you'll decide to forget that fireplace. Sell it to the Batman, and let's have this man come through the kitchen door, or something, which he would logically do, if he and Britt Reid were both modern, experienced, bright executives." Finally, Dozier had to ask Trendle to stop mentioning the fireplace, adding that these gimmicks were both well received by ABC executives and were what helped distinguish the show from otherwise being "vintage 1940." TLS, Dozier to Trendle, September 8, 1966. Dozier made a similar plea in TLS, Dozier to Trendle, July 21, 1966.

82.Typical is a May 9, 1966 letter, in which Trendle complained, "I again get to my usual comment about the D.A. being called by the buzz, and then answering the call like an office boy. These fellows have seen too much of 'Batman'. I wish you could be convinced that this is not TV for the Green Hornet!" For other examples of this oft-repeated complaint, see TLS, Trendle to Dozier, January 22, 1966; TLS, Trendle to Dozier, March 3, 1966; TLS, Trendle to Dozier, June 2, 1966; and TLS, Trendle to Dozier, July 21, 1966. In a May 26, 1966 letter Trendle took exception to Dozier's misrepresentation of what District Attorney's actually did and worried that if these gaffes were not logically explained, audiences would balk at the product. "Now the D.A. is not officially the man to collect money for a guarantee given by the city, and I feel there must be some explanation... The D.A. is a prosecutor, i.e., an officer of the Court, and not a policeman, so we have to cover up for him as much as possible."

83. See TLS, Trendle to Dozier, May 13, 1966; TLS, Trendle to Dozier, June 2, 1966;

84. See TLS, Dozier to Trendle, August 19, 1966, in which he assuages Trendle's concerns that the Green Hornet's mask was to small and that other characters would surely recognize he and his alter ego, Britt Reid, were one in the same. "You will discover, as we have on BATMAN, that the majority of this kind of audience accepts the fact that people do not

recognize these heroes when they put on masks."
85. TLS, Trendle to Dozier, May 13, 1966. See also TLS, Trendle to Dozier, April 28, 1966; TLS, Trendle to Dozier, May 2, 1966; TLS, Trendle to Dozier, June 9, 1966 for similar concerns.
86. TLS, Bluel to Trendle, September 6, 1966.
87. Ibid.
88. TLS, Trendle to Bluel, September 8, 1966.
89. TLS, Trendle to Dozier, November 26, 1965; TLS, Trendle to Dozier, January 22, 1966.
90. These elements had been integral to the selling of the Lone Ranger in the postwar period, where Americanism and consumerism were often conflated. They were also essential components for appeasing radio networks, regulators, sponsors, and advocacy groups in the 1930s and 1940s, where the emergent youth market banged heads with mounting anxieties over the negative moral values popular personalities imparted. Selling to children had to be justified/ offset by the promise of teaching them the right values in the process.
91. TLS, Trendle to Dozier, November 26, 1965.
92. TLS, Dozier to Trendle, July 26, 1966.
93. Jason Mittell has argued that Dragnet's successful revival in the late 1960s was partly the result of audiences finding its sternness "funny" and reading the series through a "camp" lens, counter to how Webb envisioned the series, and certainly counter to what Trendle understood its appeal to be. See Jason Mittell, Genre and Television: From Cop Shows to Cartoons in American Culture (New York: Routledge, 2004), 148-152.
94. TLS, Dozier to Trendle, September 11, 1967. It is not my assertion that Dozier's claims are correct. Obviously, Dragnet is as much a fictional construct as any other television narrative. It is significant, however, for revealing the wide gap between how he and Trendle understood the Green Hornet.
95. TLS, Trendle to Dozier, November 9, 1965; TLS, Trendle to Dozier, November 26, 1965.
96. In fact, he told Dozier as much in an October 7, 1965 letter in which he enclosed pictures of the sketches of Britt Reid that had been used in late 1930s publicity. "These pictures were made many years ago and times have changed and the type of clothing will change somewhat... you can gather from the picture... the type of man we have in mind."
97. See TLS, Trendle to Dozier, January 22, 1966; TLS, Trendle to

Dozier, May 26, 1966.
98. In fact, Trendle wrote to Dozier on multiple occasions about these precise things asking for lines of dialogue to be added explaining the changes. See TLS, Trendle to Dozier, August 19, 1966; TLS, Trendle to Dozier, April 28, 1966; TLS, Trendle to Dozier, May 5, 1966; TLS, Dozier to Trendle, May 16, 1966; TLS, Trendle to Dozier, May 20, 1966;
99. TLS, Trendle to Dozier, January 22, 1966.
100. See TLS, Trendle to Dozier, December 1, 1966; TLS, Trendle to Dozier, March 11, 1966
101. TLS, Trendle to Dozier, July 25, 1966. See also TLS, Trendle to Dozier, August 4, 1966, where he states, "I think its popularity was entirely due to being a 'racket' program, and if you start making an entirely different type of television program, where's the sense in buying THE GREEN HORNET? If the show is changed, the name means nothing." Also, after the series had been cancelled, TLS, Trendle to Dozier, April 17, 1967: "If the radio stories were no good, and the number of listeners so small, why would anyone pay the price set up in the contract? It just doesn't make any sense that you would agree to pay us that amount of money for a property about which you had such an opinion, when you could have produced a new show, under any name, and paid no royalties nor percentages whatsoever."
102. TLS, Dozier to Trendle, October 17, 1966. See also TLS, Dozier to Trendle, July 25, 1966.
103. Typical of Dozier's response to Trendle's concerns is this passage from an August 23, 1966 letter. "You always thought it was necessary, and I never thought so. I don't think anybody is going to wonder why GREEN HORNET now has a district attorney whereas twenty-five years ago, he had a police commissioner on radio. If they do and if anyone asks you why we made the change, I think the simplest thing is to tell the truth, namely, we changed the character of the police commissioner to a district attorney, because we wanted to avoid any possible parallel with BATMAN." See also TLS, Dozier to Trendle, March 10, 1966.
104. A July 28, 1966 ABC Feature press release described the forthcoming series in this manner: "For the uninitiated, 'The Green Hornet,' taken from the radio series of the 30s, is the tale of a 'larger-than-life' crime fighter who, along with his faithful valet Kato, ad his super-car, The Black Beauty, fights crime wherever he finds it."
105. For a discussion of the differences between episodic and repisodic

memories as applied to how contemporary audiences remembered the Dozier Batman series, see Spigel and Jenkins, 135.
106. Spigel, 59-60.
107. Spigel and Jenkins, 119, 130.
108. See ABD Feature press release, May 26, 1966.
109. TLS, Dozier to Trendle, January 5, 1967.
110. See TLS, Trendle to Dozier, May 13, 1966; TLS, Dozier to Trendle, August 19, 1966. In this letter, Dozier also suggests that Trendle should direct his comments to the series producer Dick Bluel instead of directly to Dozier.
111. TLS, Trendle to Dozier, June 9, 1966. See also TLS, Trendle to Dozier, June 22, 1966.
112. See TLS, Trendle to Dozier, January 22, 1966; TLS, Trendle to Dozier, September 14, 1966; TLS, Trendle to Dozier, December 1, 1966. In a May 18, 1966 letter he even suggested that the practice of cannibalizing past scripts had been both routine and expected on his other two TV adaptations. “When we made the Lone Ranger and the Sergeant Preston series, they wanted scripts from me... They used parts of the scripts and came up with what I thought were some very good shows.”
113. TLS, Trendle to Dozier, January 22, 1966. See also TLS, Trendle to Dozier, June 22, 1966; TLS, Trendle to Dozier, August 4, 1966; TLS, Trendle to Bluel, September 20, 1966. Trendle’s corrections even addressed typographical errors. Dozier assured him that the script continuity supervisor would catch these. Trendle responded “after having checked some 6000 radio scripts... I reached the conclusion that the only way to check a script is to REALLY check a script... What may seem silly to you... may also seem silly to me, but at the same time, as long as I put them on paper, they’re brought to your attention, whether you’ve already noticed them or not... I don’t consider it a waste of time to comment on anything that’s obvious or trivial, because in checking all those other scripts, I found many things that had been overlooked by three or four people, until the script cam to me.” TLS, Dozier to Trendle, June 20, 1966.
114. TLS, Dozier to Trendle, August 1, 1966 AND TLS, Bluel to Trendle, September 16, 1966.
115. TLS, Trendle to Dozier, January 17, 1967.
116. In a March 25, 1967 letter, Trendle suggested that “there was just enough camp in the program to tune out the adult audience, and enough

'corn' in it to keep the youngsters interested in it as they had been on BATMAN, so we both suffer."
117. TLS, Dozier to Trendle, January 3, 1967.
118. TLS, Trendle to Dozier, January 10, 1967.
119. See The Green Hornet one-hour proposal. Circa December 1966. In the proposal, Dozier changes his previous position, now arguing that they had tried to make the series too much like Batman, appealing directly to kids, when the materials were better suited to a teen-aged and young adult audience. "Its characters are by nature not as bizarre, flamboyant, or colorful. Its plots cannot be as wild and unrealistic."
120. TLS, Dozier to Trendle, November 21, 1966.
121. TLS, Trendle to Dozier, December 9, 1966. Trendle did have various radio surveys that pointed to an audience following for the series, but these did not categorize respondents by age grouping, merely as either adults or children.
122. Ibid.
123. Humphrey, TV Times, March 19-25, 1967.
124. Interestingly, Brooker's analysis of the Batman TV series argues that it was precisely because that series took its fantastical elements so seriously that it became a camp success with adult audiences. Jason Mittell makes a similar argument about the late 1960s Dragnet reprisal. See Brooker, 201 and Mittell, 148-152.
125. All earning and loss figures culled from Accounting on 'Green Hornet' as of September 26, 1970 receipt sent by TCFT to GHI.
126. TLS, Trendle to Dozier, April 10, 1967.
127. TLS, Dozier to Trendle, April 12, 1967.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

In a July 12, 2006 interview appearing in the *Comic Shop News*, writer Brett Matthews describes the genesis of the new *Lone Ranger* comic book debuting September 2006 from Dynamite Entertainment. Matthews' explanation of the how the Lone Ranger brand is being re-interpreted for contemporary audiences reveals the extent to which recycling the long-established elements of the Lone Ranger formula, now encoded as culturally iconic memories, are integral to the industrial labor that goes into reactivating classic intellectual properties. Matthews states:

> I think it's okay if things *evolve*. But you know what? – the characters you love and the stories you remember from back when you were a kid, they're not going anywhere. Nothing can or ever will take them away. And so I thinks it's okay – actually a really good thing, when more people get to discover something you find so special... if the core of the thing remains that same, on some level you're all responding to the same thing, which is probably what made the Lone Ranger an icon in the first place. And why he should always remain one... That said, some re-interpretations are just about getting back to basics or the roots of a character, set in a world that is applicable to the audience of today.[1]

Matthews' comments hint at the marketability of nostalgia and the availability of technologies and media distribution systems that circulate older versions of brands alongside their modernized updates. They also

reveal the extent to which formula management remains essential to extending brands well into the twenty-first century, as does the continuation of recycling practices -- both core components of independent licensor occupational functions. As the article succinctly summarizes Matthews' plans for the Lone Ranger, "[They] include something old and something new – a lot of classic Lone Ranger, seasoned with elements of contemporary reinterpretation."[2]

With the recent relaunch of the Superman film franchise and success of the Spiderman films, there can be no doubt that extending branded commercial intertexts across media and merchandising sites are central to contemporary conglomerate strategies. Brand formulas remain carefully managed, with particular attention paid to marketing both the universal – as opposed to strictly American or historically contingent – appeals of these properties and their iconic cultural status. The ubiquity of branded properties in almost every possible mediated form and merchandising ploy have allowed millions of consumers who may perhaps never have read a *Superman* comic book or seen an episode of the 1950s *Lone Ranger* television series to become familiar with these characters so that they seem to be merely free-floating popular culture signifiers rather than proprietary properties. Eileen Meehan's explication of Tim Burton's

Batman's commercial intertext, in which merchandise and media spin-offs were not merely bi-products of the film, but essential to extending the audience's experience of the Batman brand, remains relevant to contemporary branding strategies.[3] While the two *Spiderman* films have grossed a combined $777,292,220, those profits do not include revenue generated from the Spiderman theme park ride, soundtracks, novelizations, animated cartoons, action figures, toys, ephemera and the Spiderman comic books, which continue to be both the source materials for the films and sites that incorporate and extend the movies' narratives and plot innovations. The sites where iconic brands remain invisible or unauthorized remain equally important. Tellingly, there is no Superman or Spiderman-brand pornography, condoms, cigarettes or malt liquor on the market

Where this project has intervened in industrial histories of media conglomeration is in situating these inter-textual branding practices much earlier, tracing their roots back to the 1930s and the work performed by independent licensor's like George Trendle. It is important to acknowledge the generative mechanisms that have led to contemporary media practices in order to understand these continuities, and to watch how these practices have been transformed to meet shifting industrial

conditions and cultural attitudes.[4] As such, this project is in dialogue with scholarship on the "New Hollywood," complementing the work of Tom Schatz, Richard Maltby, Eileen Meehan, Valerie Wee and many others by pointing to the ways current cross-promotional, trans-mediated, and intertextual strategies were negotiated nearly three-quarters of a century prior.[5] As Jay Hoberman argued in his elaboration of "vulgar modernism," all of these elements, though perhaps more intensely pursued in the current era, have precedents in earlier cultural and industrial practices; those historical connections must be excavated and analyzed if we truly hope to understand the contemporary media climate.[6] This project is also in dialogue with works by Christopher Anderson and Michele Hilmes on early cross-media interactions.[7] By focusing on the roles played by licensors to negotiate these relationships by positioning the brand as a shared commodity existing above any particular media text, I have argued for the importance of intermediaries in transforming media practices and the need for historical accounts that recognize these occupational communities that often have existed between producers and sponsors, networks and studios.

In this project, I have argued that Trendle's licensing practices would prove influential on the development of this occupational

community. While he was not the only licensor operating in the 1930s – most newspaper syndicates licensed their comic strip properties and Walt Disney and John Dille were heavily invested in merchandising Mickey Mouse and Buck Rogers materials as well – Trendle was arguably the most invested in asserting both his ownership and managerial authority over the brand formulas used to showcase the Lone Ranger and Green Hornet. Future comparative research on Dille, Disney and Trendle would help flesh out how normative Trendle's actions were in relation to other licensors. Also, future research must consider the significance of Trendle's position as an independent regional radio network owner in delineating his creative control over his brands in relation to Dille and Disney's respective starting points as a print publisher and film producer with different audiences, conventions of authorship, and marketing strategies at play.

Trendle's conflation of authorship and ownership would be taken up in the early 1940s by cowboy stars like Gene Autry, Roy Rogers, and William Boyd, who both embodied their brand identities and acquired the rights to merchandise their own images. Similarly, cartoonists like Charles Schultz and Hank Ketchum asserted greater control over their comic strips in the early 1950s, demanding greater percentages of merchandise

royalties and stricter control over the creative exploitation of the Peanuts and Dennis the Menace brands. As Trendle was the least directly involved in the creative process, he foreground his role as moral arbiter, supervising the exploitation of his brands and ensuring that their moral integrity remained formulaicly consistent. While Trendle's assertion that ownership and authorship were linked would help shape media industry discourse on trademark protection in the 1950s, the licensor's insistence on his continued role as moral arbiter as central to this authorship function exceeded industry norms by the late 1950s and was seen as a hindrance to the full exploitation of media brands. In effect, while Trendle's practices helped establish industry licensing and merchandising norms, the degree of creative and managerial authority he commanded contributed to his eventual downfall.

In following Trendle's career and the development and attempted exploitation of the Lone Ranger and Green Hornet brand formulas, this project has provided a historically-situated analysis of how licensing and branding practices were popularized and gradually incorporated within larger trans-media conglomerates. I have argued in favor of investigating the work practices and cultural values of licensors in shaping intellectual properties into cultural icons, while also tracing how many of these work

practices were eventually co-opted by emerging media conglomerates even as the occupational habitus – the cultural values and work habits that defined the boundaries of licensor occupational identities – were increasingly marginalized. By the time Trendle finally managed to get the Green Hornet on television in the mid-1960s, many of the cross-promotional, recycling and merchandising strategies he had championed for nearly thirty years quickly were becoming industry standards. Yet, Trendle's own identity as an independent intermediary, who managed how the Green Hornet formula was being interpreted and guarded against deviations that might upset the public's appreciation of the brand, were now considered anachronistic interferences with the smooth process of brand exploitation. Though the Lone Ranger and Green Hornet brand formulas promoted the innate goodness of corporate capitalist values, the era of independent entrepreneurialism that had helped shape these icons was over. As the networks and studios began operating their own in-house licensing and merchandising divisions that closely managed brand extensions and intellectual property infringements, and as concerns over the negative implications of transforming children into consumers subsided in the postwar era (partly in response to the work done by Trendle and others on foregrounding the civic virtues of their brands),

independent licensors like Trendle found their roles greatly reduced, either to merely collecting royalties by leasing out their property, or to becoming company men working within, rather than alongside, larger corporate entities.

It is clear, however, that by the time Trendle's career was ending, conglomeration was still at a nascent phase, with only MCA-Universal up-and-running and Kinney's purchase of Warner Bros only hinting at the emergence of the Time-Warner empire. It would take these conglomerates until the 1980s to begin truly exploiting the cross-promotional possibilities of their brands. In other words, there is a historical gap in the transitional years between Trendle's downfall and the full integration of brand exploitation strategies. While this project has demonstrated that licensing, merchandising, and other synergistic trans-mediated practices did not begin with conglomeration in the late 1960s, but were integral aspects of media and merchandise production from the 1930s onwards, a substantial amount of work still remains to be done analyzing and comparing how branding strategies, once absorbed into conglomerate business models, have shifted as the once independent cultural intermediaries that managed these properties became fully integrated members of the corporate machine. A comparative study between Gene Autry's efforts to brand and

license his own singing cowboy persona, William Boyd's work on licensing Hopalong Cassidy, and Trendle's contemporaneous strategies with the Lone Ranger would shed light on how generalizable licensing practices in the late 1940s were, especially amongst agents working to extend cowboy brands. Additionally, the Wrather Corporation's exploitation of the Lone Ranger brand differed from TCM's strategies only a few years earlier and the Licensing Corporation of America's (LCA) emergence in the mid-1960s changed licensing strategies once again. A comparative study of Wrather's efforts with the Lone Ranger in the late 1950s and LCA's work on Batman, Bond, and other licenses in the 1960s with Trendle's own struggles to exploit the Green Hornet brand would be an important means of distinguishing how licensing practices adapted to meet changing production environments and cultural attitudes. Tracing how licensing practices have shifted from LCA's work in the 1960s to current branding efforts by Marvel Comics and Classic Media, Inc., (CMI) would allow for considerations of how different industrial and cultural climates articulate longstanding brand formulas differently, while still continuing to reference previous iterations.

Contemporary branding strategies must contend with media technologies that allow past texts to be preserved while they circulate

alongside current brand articulations; they must also consider the rise of fan communities who have far greater investments in and knowledge of the continuity and malleability of brand formulas. As a result, current branding efforts also pay very close attention to inter-textual continuity, with a greater eye toward marketing formula innovations and modernizations by directly comparing them with earlier renditions. Reviews of the current *Superman Returns* motion picture repeatedly have discussed its purposeful referencing of the 1978 blockbuster film through scenes that visually recreate moments from the original, while giving those iconic moments a modern twist. For example, the opening of the film recreates the destruction of the planet Krypton and the rocket ship with baby Superman traveling toward earth by overlaying the original dialogue spoken by Marlon Brando as Superman's father Jor-El. Tthe classic John Williams orchestral music plays on top of new CGI graphic effects that render the planet's explosion and the ship's trajectory in spectacular fashion. Another example of this would be the 2005 *Dukes of Hazard* feature film that included the original 1978 TV pilot of the television show as a special feature on the recent DVD release. While such comparative recycling strategies are purposeful marketing ploys, they also provide opportunities for scholars to examine how successful cultural

brands are readjusted to meet changing assumptions about audience expectations and consumer habits.

In tracing a licensing lineage from Trendle to Wrather through LCA and CMI, it would be possible to investigate the subtle shifts amongst licensing agents' attitudes toward their work, as their own intermediary and independent statuses gradually declined – to the point where LCA became just a division within Time-Warner's media empire. Similarly, it would be important to analyze licensor's shifting occupational roles in relation to changing definitions of youth markets and the attending concerns over exploiting young consumers as enacted in regulatory, corporate, and cultural arenas over the past half century.

This project has attempted to fulfill the demands made by scholars Paul DuGay and Sean Nixon, Liz McFall, and Keith Negus for in-depth and historically situated explorations of the particular motivations that undergird cultural intermediaries in its focus on the occupational habitus of the licensing profession prior to conglomeration.[8] This historical intervention argues for the need to understand the motivations and cultural values that shaped licensor business practices, not merely the outcomes of such strategies. Roland Marchand has argued that adverting agents in the 1920s saw themselves as apostles of modernity, ushering in a new era of

consumption and teaching the American public how to take advantage of the myriad consumer choices available to them.[9] I argue that licensors saw themselves as moral arbiters who helped bring consumers to sponsors, but also guarded against consumer exploitation through misappropriation of their brands. In so doing, I also have argued in favor of cultural economic approaches to analyzing media practices, which explore how cultural values inform production processes in conjunction with how production processes shape cultural products.

Moreover, I have demonstrated throughout this project how George Trendle helped construct the very category of cultural intermediary that I've assigned to him. This is an important contribution, because it suggests that occupational identities are neither stable nor natural, but always shaped through the experiences, actions, and values of the individuals working within them. In particular, Trendle occupied a complex position as both cultural creator and producer on the one hand and inter-textual manager and moral arbiter on the other. As such, the licensor occupied both an insider and outsider status that most cultural intermediaries cannot attain. In part, Trendle's creative authority emerged out of his position as an independent radio station owner, which allowed him to initially operate unfettered by larger institutional and corporate

demands on his properties. Already having established creative and production control over the radio formula for the Lone Ranger, Trendle was then able to license the brand – and his services as manager and arbiter -- to other cultural manufacturers and producers, sponsors and networks while retaining his own creative authority over the production process. Once radio's centrality for sponsors and networks dissipated by the mid-1950s, however, resulting in Trendle's loss of direct production control over his brands, the licensor's authority as cultural intermediary also diminished.

Trendle's career suggests that while we currently envision cultural intermediaries as existing on the interstices between producers and consumers, but not actively involved in the production process, historically, certain intermediaries functioned as both producers and mediators. Arguably, Trendle's double status as both producer and licensor finds parallels in the contemporary comic book industry, which continues to use the creative aspects of comic book storytelling to generate new characters and formulas that can then be licensed out to toy and merchandise manufacturers and other media producers. Future work on the historical relationship between production and mediation amongst cultural intermediaries must explore how those aspects intersect and are

informed by changes to larger institutional structures and cultural values.

While I support the theories put forward by scholars like Paul DiMaggio, Paul Hirsch, Richard Petersen, Janet Staiger and Janet Wolff about the production of culture, I have diverged from their models by exploring precisely those "inexplicable" and "imaginary" assumptions that DiMaggio and Hirsch inevitably conclude inform the gate-keeping functions performed by cultural intermediaries in determining what innovations are permissible and what lines cannot be crossed for fear of alienating or upsetting consumers and regulators.[10] The production of culture literature is valuable in outlining how tensions emerge between different creative and managerial personnel in shaping both the product and production conventions for brand formulas. Inevitably, however, scholars like DiMaggio and Hirsch conclude that these tensions are resolved rationally while the "etiology of conventions about what is and what is not permissible… remains one of the sociology of art's outstanding mysteries."[11] I have argued in favor of a cultural economic approach to analyzing tensions between actors precisely because it does not see conflict resolution as rational, but rather as informed by struggles over conflicting and shifting cultural values and efforts to rationalize these values as economically viable. Moreover, I have articulated how cultural

producers write their own values onto those of the audiences they imagine; values shaped by their particular class and occupational taste cultures.

By exploring how Trendle positioned himself as a cultural intermediary who simultaneously managed cross-promotional relations between different cultural producers and helped bring consumers and sponsors together, I have articulated a complex relationship between the cultural and economic values that informed licensing practices. Believing that the economic viability of his properties emerged from their unchanging moral characterizations and generalizable formula adaptations, Trendle often privileged preserving the brand's continuity over economic gains that might be derived from either associating the brand with "unsavory" elements or by altering the formula. This often produced tensions over how the brand was articulated, but these conflicts were rarely economically motivated in the final instance (though Trendle's insistence in preserving the brand's sanctity was often justified in economic terms). Trendle saw himself as a moral arbiter who ensured that consumers – and particularly child consumers – were protected against egregious exploitations of his brands by producers and manufacturers. As such, Trendle was unwilling to change his business model even as licensing practices moved in-house, because such a shift was antithetical

to his occupational identity.

Clearly, future work on how licensing and branding practices have developed under conglomeration must explore how the values and attitudes of licensing agents have shifted in relation to changing cultural production climates and new social attitudes toward consumption, civic duty, and nationalism. As branding has gradually become a global phenomenon, overt references to Americanism in the formulas used to construct cultural icons have declined in favor of strategies meant to extend brands into international and transnational markets. Any future research into contemporary branding would need to investigate the shifting definitions of nationalism and civic participation as articulated through brand formulas that are not specifically targeting American citizens. The height of the Lone Ranger's popularity in the 1950s also corresponded with a moment in US history in which containment logics intersected with both political and economic practices. As CMI works to revive the brand in comic book and feature film forms over the next couple of years, it will be interesting to see if and how it adapts the Lone Ranger formula to appeal to expanding global markets that thrive on multiculturalism and malleable (though still closely monitored) trade borders.

Throughout this project, I have argued in support of Michael Kackman's prioritization of the brand as the ultimate trans-mediated commodity of exchange, above and beyond the individual texts that promote it.[12] By repositioning the brand as the primary object bought and sold by cultural producers, I have argued for the need to reconceptualize brand authorship as a form of inter-textual management across multiple mediated articulations and for the licensor's authorial role as tied to this managerial function. Historically, licensors like Trendle worked to disassociate the actual creative work performed by actors, cartoonists, directors, and scriptwriters on Lone Ranger or Green Hornet texts from authorship of the brand itself. Though this primarily served to reinforce licensor control over properties, it also had the cumulative effect of making brands like the Lone Ranger appear "authorless" and thus a part of the popular cultural landscape, rather than a tightly managed formula whose authorship firmly rests in the hands of the property's owners. Trendle sought to construct non-media specific Lone Ranger fan communities through the Lone Ranger Safety Clubs, which elevated the hero above and situated him outside of any particular textual representations that depicted his adventures. The licensor also tried to separate the Lone Ranger's status as a cultural icon from the actual work

performed in developing and sustaining that myth. For decades, Lone Ranger writers and directors toiled anonymously on the property, while the actors who adorned the Lone Ranger mask had virtually no public personas outside of the character they portrayed. In public, Clayton Moore *was* the Lone Ranger, not an actor who counted the character as merely one of many performances in a long, distinguished career. Given Trendle's preference for obscuring the creative work done on the brand -- but not the managerial work he performed in maintaining the inter-textual consistency of the formula and moral virtues of the character – it is perhaps worth imagining for a moment what might have happened had the licensor struck a successful feature film deal with David O. Selznick, who not only would have insisted on his own authorial stamp on the project, but contemplated casting Gary Cooper as the masked rider. Cooper and Selznick's star personas might arguably have eclipsed the Lone Ranger's, demythologizing the property in the process as well as constricting Trendle's own authority over the Lone Ranger brand.

While privileging the brand over the star would continue to be a routine practice well into the late 1980s, there has been a shift in branding strategies dating back to Tim Burton's 1989 direction of *Batman* toward marketing the synergy between brands and the "unique" artistic visions of

the creative communities that are re-interpreting them. It is not so much that Tim Burton assumed authorship of the Batman brand, but rather that his authorial take on the presumably authorless cultural icon was essential to the film's marketing campaign. Similarly, Bryan Singer's take on the Superman myth is as essential to the marketing campaign for *Superman Returns* as the character itself. Publicity for the upcoming *Lone Ranger* comic book has also stressed the importance of the writer and artists working on the book to the franchise's revival. "Licensing a classic character isn't always a formula for success, though, which is why Dynamite set out to find just the right creative team."[13] Foregrounding the "interpretive" skills of the authors working on extending established brands suggests a changing role for both licensors and their roles as brand managers in the contemporary media conglomerate culture.

It also opens these brand formulas up for creative innovations for which licensors like Trendle never would have stood. Trendle insisted that violence be downplayed and graphic or gruesome depictions be eliminated entirely. The cover of the forthcoming *Lone Ranger* comic book features a blood-soaked Texas Ranger's badge that emphasizes the violence of the hero's origins [see image #1]. Likewise, Singer's inclusion of a potential illegitimate child born to Lois Lane following her brief tryst with

Superman has produced heated discussions amongst both fans and the creative community working on other facets of the Superman brand over whether this ought to be written into the character's inter-textual continuity. DC Comics has stated that it approved the formula change because it saw the need to update the Superman brand and make it less wholesome and more in touch with contemporary cultural concerns.[14] Singer's star power must not be discounted, however, in its ability to effect this change. Comic book writer Tony Siegel proposed having Clark Kent and Lois Lane have a child together several years ago while he was writing the *Superman* comic. DC refused his request. Future research must investigate this shifting relationship between authorship and cultural brands and analyze how independent licensors, in erasing the creative work performed on their properties, helped establish the criteria through which creative interpretation of brand formulas has now become a routine media conglomerate practice.

It is also important to recognize that the current wave of licensed trans-media brands have tended to be of the superhero variety (Spiderman, Superman, Batman, X-men, Daredevil, Fantastic Four, Aquaman), most if not all tracing their origins back to the comic book industry. Efforts to revive the Lone Ranger brand since the 1960s, including the 1981 motion

picture and the 2003 WB television movie, largely have failed. This raises questions about both the sustainability of certain brand formulas over others and the roles of media origin and public archiving in keeping certain brands in the public eye better than others. The Lone Ranger and Green Hornet brands emerged out of radio and their formulas were initially designed to meet the specific needs of that media industry at a particular historical moment. Both brands were constructed to attract sponsors, deliver and protect children audiences, and develop premiums. Comic book superhero formulas were conceived with different media cultural and economic concerns in mind. Comic books trace their origins back to the adventure and detective genres popularized by pulp novel publishers – Superman debuted in *Action Comics* #1 while Batman first appeared in *Detective Comics* #23. Both heroes were featured alongside several other short like-genre stories – and comic strip syndicates' seeking to find a secondary market to reprint newspaper strips. Neither pulp novel publishers nor comic strip syndicates saw children as their primary audience. In fact, pulp publishers often catered to the lurid tastes assumed to belong to the lower classes (though actual sales were usually dispersed across all income brackets). As purchased items that consumers willingly chose to bring into their homes, comic books were not initially subject to

the same regulatory concerns as radio, which was a “free” service that entered the private sphere without consumer control over its content. While the comic book industry would undergo significant changes in terms of its target audience and content regulation, it is arguable that these initial conditions structured brand formulas quite differently than those developed for radio.

A comparative study between comic book and radio brands would shed light on how each constructed its formulas and its audiences differently, and may provide answers as to why certain icons continue to be popular while others have had more difficulty in maintaining a persistent public presence. For instance, in the early 1980s the comic book industry worked with local retailers to promote a collector’s market that encouraged fans to familiarize themselves with and seek out older iterations of particular brands. Promoting acquisition and consumption of an archive of past Superman, Batman, and Spiderman stories not only brought new consumers to these characters, but fostered a strong fan community intricately aware of the narrative continuities and formulaic elements of each brand. Comparatively, as television eclipsed radio as the site for fictional dramatic programming, it became virtually impossible to hear older Lone Ranger and Green Hornet radio episodes. Though some

episodes did circulate in transcription form on various local radio stations and other episodes were eventually packaged as audio cassettes for cars in the early 1970s, fans were not encouraged (nor were they able) to seek out missing episodes hidden in attic boxes, nor was a public repository created like that of comic book shops that stock back issues.

While Lone Ranger merchandise became collectors' items, the formulaic texts that promoted the brand's values did not. Old Time Radio (OTR) clubs have existed since the 1970s and have gained new exposure over the internet, but the content options remain limited to a handful of episodes. OTR clubs often traffic in anecdotal histories that tend to reinforce the mythical qualities of a property like the Lone Ranger, but do little to familiarize new audiences with the formula or encourage new versions of classic texts. Similarly, while *Lone Ranger* television episodes have circulated in reruns on cable networks devoted to nostalgia TV, like TV Land and Nick-at-Nite, the emphasis often placed on the historically finite texts on such cable channels rather than on the continuous brand often work against comparisons of formula innovations. Quite simply, comic book publishers not only encouraged collecting older versions of their branded products, but they encouraged collecting older versions of on-going branded products that placed an emphasis on a comparative

mode of formula assessment, not merely a nostalgic reverence for past iterations. Any future study of branding and licensing would need to investigate how different media origins contributed to marketing strategies intended to activate nostalgic interest in past brand iterations. As I stated earlier, contemporary branding strategies rely on audience pre-knowledge of a brand's formula in order to promote "updated" versions.

Thus, it is telling that Dynamite Entertainment's promotion of the new *Lone Ranger* comic book goes out of its way to compare the character with Superman, Batman, and Spiderman. The *Comic Shop News* article restates the Lone Ranger's origin as synonymous with Batman's and Spiderman's – all three came into existence because they witnessed the murder of loved ones by criminals that compelled their crime fighting ways. Dynamite cleverly conflates the Lone Ranger's historical setting in the 1870s with the character being the first superhero. "This is *the first* superhero we're talking about, the first man to put on a mask and right the wrongs of the age! The inspiration for all others..."[15] Not only is this comparison in sharp contrast to Trendle's vehement opposition to compare his properties with the phony superhero varieties circulating on 1960s television, but it conveniently effaces the fact that the Lone Ranger's creation in 1933 was contemporaneous with the birth of other modern pulp

heroes like the Shadow, Zorro, and the Phantom.

Another Dynamite press release refers to the Lone Ranger as the original defender of "truth, justice, and the American way" – Superman's famed byline since the 1950s *Adventures of Superman* TV series.[16] On the one hand, this is likely a case of opportunistic marketing that is attempting to tie the comic book into buzz being generated about *Superman Returns*. On the other hand, this promotional strategy speaks to the relative absence of recent Lone Ranger stories – either new or reruns – that could be mined for cultural references. Finally, the reference to the Lone Ranger's mission to fight for the American way is telling of how the current formula engages quite differently with contemporary cultural concerns than the brand with which it is being indirectly compared. *Superman Returns* has raised eyebrows amongst conservatives for its deliberate exclusion of the American way as amongst what Superman fights for. Arguably, this is less a political statement on the part of the film's producers than a strategic attempt to appeal to global audiences; yet, the brand's failure to promote Americanism overtly (indirectly, it continues to push for increased corporate capitalism and consumerism) has been deemed unpatriotic by some. The Lone Ranger brand appears to be positioned quite differently through marketing that compares the hero not with the current Superman

incarnation, but with his 1950s counterpart who emphatically stood for the American way in much the same way that the 1950s Lone Ranger advocated for American exceptionalism. Studies of contemporary licensing practices must take into account the growing complexity inter-textual management strategies and their relation to recycling brand formulas as forms of cultural nostalgia.

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1. Cliff Biggers, “The Lone Ranger Rides Again!,”Comic Shop News, 995, 12 July 2006, 1.
2. Ibid, 1.
3. Eileen Meehan, "Holy Commodity Fetish, Batman! The Political Economy of a Commercial Intertext,” in The Many Lives of the Batman: Critical Approaches to a Superhero and his Media, ed. Roberta E. Pearson and William Uricchio (New York: Routledge University Press, 1991), 47-65.
4. See Richard Allen and Douglas Gomery, Film history: Theory and Practice (New York: Knopf, 1985).
5. See Thomas Schatz, "The New Hollywood,” in Film Theory Goes to the Movies, ed. Jim Collins, Hillary Radner and Ava Preacher Collins (New York: Routledge University Press, 1993), 8-36; Richard Maltby, "Nobody Knows Everything: Post-Classical Historiographies and Consolidated Entertainment,” in Contemporary Hollywood Cinema, ed. Steve Neale and Murray Smith (London: Routledge University Press, 1998), 21-44; Eileen Meehan, "Holy Commodity Fetish, Batman! The Political Economy of a Commercial Intertext,” in The Many Lives of the Batman: Critical Approaches to a Superhero and his Media, ed. Roberta E. Pearson and William Uricchio (New York: Routledge University Press, 1991), 47-65; and Valerie Wee, "Selling Teen Culture: How American Multimedia Conglomeration Reshaped Teen Television in the 1990s,” in Teen TV: Genre, Consumption, Identity, ed. Glyn Davis and Kay Dickinson (London: BFI Publishing, 2004), 87-98.
6. J. Hoberman, Vulgar Modernism: Writing on Movies and Other Media (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991).

7. See, Christopher Anderson, Hollywood TV: The Studio System in the Fifties (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994); and Michele Hilmes, Hollywood and Broadcasting: From Radio to Cable (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990).
8. See Sean Nixon and Paul du Gay, "Who Needs Cultural Intermediaries?," Cultural Studies 16:4 (2002): 496; Liz McFall, "What About Old Cultural Intermediaries? An Historical Review of Advertising Producers," Cultural Studies 16:4 (2002): 532-552; and Keith Negus, "The Work of Cultural Intermediaries and the Enduring Distance between Production and Consumption," Cultural Studies 16:4 (2002): 501-515.
9. Roland Marchand, Advertising the American Dream : Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940 (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986).
10. See Paul DiMaggio and Paul M. Hirsch, "Production Organizations in the Arts," in American Behavioral Scientist 19:6 (July/August 1976), 735-752; Richard A. Petersen, "Five Constraints on the Production of Culture: Law, Technology, Market, Organizational Structure and Occupational Careers," in Journal of Popular Culture 16:2 (Fall 1982), 148; Janet Staiger, "Introduction," in The Studio System, ed. Janet Staiger (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1995); Janet Wolff, The Social Production of Art (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981).
11. DiMaggio and Hirsch, 741-742.
12. Michael Kackman, "The Making of an Icon: *Hopalong Cassidy*, William Boyd Productions and Early Television's Transnational Transmedia Texts," Draft copy, 2006.
13. Cliff Biggers,"The Lone Ranger Rides Again!,"Comic Shop News 995 12 July 2006, 1.
14. Matt Brady, "Newsarama Classic: Superbaby?". http://www.newsarama.com/dcnew/Superman/baby/superbaby.html .
15. Biggers,1.
16. **"**MATTHEWS AND CASSADAY SIGN ON TO CREATE THE LONE RANGER®
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